



## DOCTOR OF EDUCATION (EDD)

### Capital Gains: Enhancing Social Inclusion and Employability in East London through 'Sport for Change'

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*Award date:*  
2016

*Awarding institution:*  
University of Bath

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***CAPITAL GAINS: ENHANCING SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EMPLOYABILITY IN  
EAST LONDON THROUGH ‘SPORT FOR CHANGE’***

**Haydn John Morgan**

**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Education**

**University of Bath**

**Department of Education**

**January 2016**

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## ***ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS***

First, I must express my deepest gratitude to my two supervisors for this research enquiry, Dr Manuel Souto-Otero and Professor Michael Silk. Your uncanny ability to drop a solitary pebble of wisdom into my thinking and enable the ripples it created to broaden my investigation in new and exciting directions has added multiple dimensions to this thesis. In addition, I would like to thank Professor Andrew Parker and Professor Hugh Lauder for taking the time to engage with my thesis and for agreeing to act as my examiners.

I would also like to thank my colleagues at the University of Bath in the Department of Education and the Department for Health, in particular those within the Physical Cultural Studies Research Group. I would also like to acknowledge those colleagues who have had the misfortune to share office space, car journeys and lunches with me over the years, but thank them for being ‘critical friends’ and offering continual opportunities for reflection and debate. Also, to the many students who have tolerated my lectures, thank you for the intellectual space to test my material and hypothesise out loud.

With regard to the broader project, I would like to express my gratitude to Olly Dawson at Comic Relief for granting permission to use both the Comic Relief and Sport for Change names within the thesis. Similarly, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to the staff of Access Sport, most notably, Mark Hardie, for the initial impetus to my studies of sport and social transformation, and latterly Kate Anstey and Becca Owen who have always gone the extra mile to help me identify research participants and offer refuge in their office when needed.

Continuing this theme, this research enquiry would not have been possible without the input of the club leaders, coaches and community partners who donate their time so passionately to support the young people who they engage. All of these inspirational people welcomed me so hospitably to their clubs and were so generous with their time. In particular, I must make special mention of my good friends at the Glynmore Youth Club\*, who not only made my visits to the club so enjoyable, but provided me with the majority of the young people whose stories I will document. I trust that what follows in this thesis does justice to your sterling work.

Finally, I reserve my deepest gratitude for my family. To my parents, John and Diana, I thank you for your unconditional support in all of my life aspirations, no matter how ambitious or where in the world these aspirations took me. Hopefully, the literacy of this thesis is an improvement on my English GCSE coursework! To my daughters, Rhianna and Paige, I thank you both for challenging me and delighting me in equal measure on a daily basis; and above all, to my wife, Juanita, thank you for encouraging me to go to University all those years ago and sorry for the numerous drafts of my work that you have endured—you are the most wonderful person to share life with.

\*Pseudonym used

#### **DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY OF THE THESIS**

I hereby declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education, contains no material previously published or written in any medium by another person, except where appropriate reference has been made.

## ***ABSTRACT***

This research enquiry critically examines correspondences between participation in sport with the enhancement of social inclusion for young people classified as, or ‘at-risk’ of becoming, ‘NEET’ (Not in Education, Employment or Training). Whilst policy interventions to develop social inclusion within such populations often accentuate the accumulation of three forms of capital—namely human, social and positive psychological—existing literature highlights a paradoxical relationship in respect of sport being utilised in this educational manner. Consequently, some scholars suggest that participation in sport can contribute to enhanced social inclusion, whilst others contend that such participation merely produces conforming citizens who reinforce the values of the dominant neoliberal discourse.

As a context to explore this paradox, the enquiry examines *Sport for Change*, a *Comic Relief* initiative, implemented within five boroughs in East London. As an emblematic exemplar of programmes designed to utilise sport in an instrumental manner to enhance social inclusion, this case presents clear potential for exploratory insights which may offer the basis for correspondences to emerge pertaining to programmes containing similar ambitions.

Framed by a realist evaluative philosophy, the research consisted of semi-structured interviews conducted with 22 individuals who were associated with this specific iteration of *Sport for Change*. The research engaged people at various junctures of the implementation chain, most pertinently ten young males who participated at two of the sports clubs who were recipients of the intervention.

The findings of this enquiry gleaned insights into the disconnected ‘life-world’ of young males who reside on urban residential estates, highlighting how membership of a sports club enables acceptance by a recognisable and legitimate social institution to be obtained, to initiate the process of social inclusion, and forge the trusting inter-personal relationships upon which human, social, and positive psychological capital can be developed. Consequently, the research enquiry argues that rather than the act of sports participation itself, it is these relationships, formed with club personnel who possess a community consciousness, that are critical to the enhancement of social inclusion in young people.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### *1.1 Sport and the achievement of broader social objectives—the educative worth of sport*

The utility of sport as an educative mechanism has been viewed by policy-makers, practitioners, and in some cases by academics (see Bird, Tripney & Newman, 2013; Kaufman & Wolff, 2010; Green, 2008) as an agent for social and personal change, in particular within young people (Jarvie, 2008; Coalter, 2007; Nichols, 2007). For Jarvie (2008), the foundation for such thinking is centred upon several populist, and often uncritically accepted, notions pertaining to the magnetism of sport to provide informal educational opportunities, to sustain lifelong learning opportunities, to engage young people in critical debate surrounding important public issues, to enhance relationships and networks, and contribute to the development of skills necessary for the knowledge economy. Consequently, and perhaps predictably, government policy for sport across the globe has habitually mirrored this conventional thinking in its rhetoric (Misener & Doherty, 2012), elevating the position of sport, as an educational device, to an evangelical or mythopoeic status (Coalter, 2013; 2007; Lee, Cornwell & Babiak, 2012).

However, despite this initial optimism and vocal advocacy in the policy rhetoric, the empirical and theoretical basis for sport's palliative qualities is somewhat unproven, with critical commentators suggesting that presumption and implication, rather than evidence, has informed this paradigmatic position (see Coalter, 2013; 2010; 2007; Dacombe, 2013; Bloyce & Smith, 2010). Consequently, for the recent and unprecedented investment of public money into sport-based policy in the United Kingdom (UK) (Green, 2007; Houlihan, 2005) to be premised upon a logic of inference and conventional wisdom, appears dubious and contradictory to current policy-making philosophy, which has shifted with noticeable alacrity towards an evidence-based foundation (Room, 2013; Cartwright, 2009; Biesta, 2007).

As an embarkation point to theorise the educative utility of sport-based interventions to confront social challenges and warrant its mythopoeic status, Hylton and Totten (2013) present two models of community development, which illustrate where sport may contribute in an instrumental manner. First, programmes which concur with the *social control model* espouse that



sport can be utilised as a diversionary tool or deterrent to anti-social behaviour (Green, 2008; Nichols, 2007; Coakley, 2002) with the view that participation in sport provides a lawful surrogate to violence (Hylton & Totten, 2013) or a legitimate form of excitement (Parker, Meek & Lewis, 2014; Nichols, 2007). In contrast, a second perspective, categorised within *social welfare models* (Hylton & Totten, 2013), aims more specifically at stimulating social change, both at an individual and structural level, by offering sport for underserved populations and as a mechanism to provide social welfare services to those on the margins of society (Vinson & Parker, 2013; Green, 2008; Coakley, 2002).

In both theoretical articulations, a primary consideration is the promotion of social inclusion (Hylton & Totten, 2013), whereby identified populations are afforded, through sport, access to mainstream activity, presented with openings within society (Henderson & Thomas, 2013; Vinson & Parker, 2013; Hoye, Nicholson & Houlihan, 2010; Rankin, 2005), or encouraged to build more cohesive or empowered communities through “the redistribution of opportunity” (Kelly, 2011, p. 127). Whilst a burgeoning corpus of academic literature has become attentive to conceptualisations of social inclusion (Rose, Daiches & Potier, 2012; Spandler, 2007), the existing literature points to a concept that possesses shifting meanings between academics, policy-makers, and politicians, or a term that is deployed flexibly to “serve a political function” (Levitas, 2004, p.45). Moreover, much of the scholarship surrounding social *inclusion* conflates this term with conceptualisations of social *exclusion*. Consequently, the terms social inclusion and social exclusion are often used interchangeably or presented as unproblematic opposites (Spandler, 2007), with much sport policy predicated on its intention to tackle social exclusion (Bloyce & Smith, 2010), on the premise that those who are not socially excluded must, by definition, be experiencing social inclusion. Therefore, in order to reify and demarcate this conceptual ambiguity, the primary focus of this enquiry is to examine how sports-based programmes may facilitate social inclusion.

As an additional conceptual concern, competing literature has noted the correspondence between social inclusion and *citizenship* (see Woodward, 2014)—itself a dominant feature within social control and social welfare programmes (Hylton & Totten, 2013; Coakley, 2002). As a close conceptual and policy relative to social inclusion, the deployment of sport as an educational device to enhance citizenship qualities has received much support in the literature

(see Garratt & Piper, 2014; Thompson, 2012; Garratt, 2010; Eley & Kirk, 2002), with recent sport policy discourse also reflecting this shift (Bradbury & Kay, 2008; Jarvie, 2008). Furthermore, such strategizing is consistent with discourse evident within broader social policy concerns, where citizenship education has become a staple interest for governments across the globe and an integral or compulsory aspect of educational systems and formal curricula in several nations states (Geboers, Geijssels, Admirael & ten Dam, 2013; Scheerens, 2011; ten Dam, Geijssels, Reumerman & Ledoux, 2011; Rychen & Salganik, 2003). However, despite this increased attention, conceptual clarity over the term citizenship remains elusive, contentious and contested (Geboers *et al.*, 2009; Davies, 2000), with contemporary understandings of citizenship highlighting individual morality (Silk & Andrews, 2008; Cogan, 2000); personal responsibility (Paton, Mooney & McKee, 2012; ten Dam *et al.*, 2011; Dean, 2010; Silk & Andrews, 2008; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004; Rose, 2000a); and ethical community (ten Dam *et al.*, 2011; Scheerens, 2011; Silk & Andrews, 2008) as principal foci. Consequently, this enquiry will seek to offer greater clarity as to how engagement with sport may bestow citizenship qualities upon its participants.

### ***1.2 Enhancing social inclusion and citizenship within a neoliberal political economy—the paradox of ‘sport for good’***

Whilst, at a surface level, sport-based initiatives which purport to incubate social inclusion, or that engineer accepted forms of citizenship appear to possess significant well-intentioned purposes, more critical scholars have noted how, paradoxically, such programmes merely perpetuate, embed and reinforce the pervasive, omnipresent ascendancy of neoliberalism as the dominant form of governance (Winlow & Hall, 2013; Paton *et al.*, 2012; Silk & Andrews, 2011a; 2008; Dean, 2010; Rose, 2000a). At a conceptual level, neoliberalism presents a term that has proved problematic to define (Collier, 2012; Goldstein, 2012; Peck & Theodore, 2012; Wacquant, 2012), not least within the divergences in its conception as a political or economic term (Peck & Theodore, 2012) or as a construct that is conceived as theoretically abstract or possessing an actual existence (Goldstein, 2012; Collier, 2012). Following articulations which view neoliberalism as a profoundly political project (see Wacquant, 2012; Goldstein, 2012; Peck & Theodore, 2012; Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Peck & Tickell, 2002), and possessing variegated intensities (Goldstein, 2012; Peck & Theodore, 2012), the understanding of neoliberalism that will be adopted within this thesis incorporates conceptions which highlight the interaction between state, market and citizenship to leverage opportunities for those who possess economic

and cultural capital (Wacquant, 2012) and impose restrictions upon those who lack such capital (Peck & Theodore, 2012). Such a conceptual vantage point corresponds with scholars who have noted how increasing urbanisation and the organising ‘logic’ of global neoliberalism have exacerbated the marginalisation from society of particular populations (see Paton *et al.*, 2012; Silk & Andrews, 2008), not least Nikolas Rose (2000b), who observes that the regulating practices of neoliberal governance are “best captured by the dichotomy of inclusion and exclusion” (p. 324).

Building upon this argument, and entwining Giroux’s (2004) contentions pertaining to the ‘death of the social’,<sup>1</sup> Rose (2000a) observes how, under neoliberal infused strategizing, contemporary political government has retreated from its obligation to plan, steer and answer the problems generated by and within society, towards a governance whereby individuals assume personal responsibility to become more active and enterprising in resolving these problems. This “double movement of autonomization and responsabilization” (Rose, 2000a, p. 1400) outlines how the role of government (and its policies) has shifted to one of facilitation, enabling individuals with freedom to establish and realise their own destiny.

For Paton *et al.* (2012) this ‘double movement’ is indicative of how recent social policy in the UK has encouraged citizenship to be re-imagined under the auspices of neoliberal governance, whereby policy operates to create simplistic binaries which categorise citizens on their ability to contribute to society economically, politically and morally. In semblance, Silk and Andrews (2011a; 2008) highlight how neoliberal infused public policy serves to bifurcate urban populations—and the spaces they inhabit—to present clear demarcations between citizens who are socially valorised and those who become socially pathologized, or “anti-citizens” (2011a, p. 435). Consequently, the problematization of certain people and certain places, typically those inhabiting the urban residential estate, serves as a convenient and orderly framework through which inequality can be expressed as naturalistic, whereby it is incumbent upon excluded or marginalised populaces to accumulate skills, enhance their capabilities and reduce their welfare-dependency—the hallmarks of a re-imagined, responsabilized citizenship (Banks, 2013; Winlow & Hall, 2013; Paton *et al.*, 2012). For Wacquant (2012), such policy is indicative of an “actually

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<sup>1</sup> Giroux’s notion of the ‘death of the social’ refers to the continued reduction of state apparatus and “a particularly virulent contempt for social needs” (2004, p. 206) in relation to education, healthcare and welfare.

existing neoliberalism” (p. 67), consisting of a ‘Centaur-like state’<sup>2</sup> which is uplifting and liberating for the socially valorised, yet castigatory and restrictive for subaltern populations.

Such neoliberal discourse is arguably most audible in relation to populations categorised as ‘not in education, employment or training’ (NEET), or those considered ‘at risk’ or displaying indicators of NEET status (RONI). Despite its conceptual ambiguity, NEET populations are typically defined as young people aged 16 to 19 years old who spend, or are likely to spend, a considerable portion of time not undertaking any form of education, employment or training (Nudzor, 2010; Finlay, Sheridan, McKay & Nudzor, 2010). Clearly, within a political era which valorises paid employment and demonises welfare dependency (Silk & Andrews, 2011a; Levitas, 2005), to be classified as NEET implies moral repugnance and membership of a population which is anti-aspirational, irresponsible and negligent of its duty to society (Winlow & Hall, 2013). Moreover, within such discourse, to be branded NEET infers affiliation with a community lacking the wherewithal to lessen their dependency upon the state, to portray it as a stigmatising, exclusionary label (Yates & Payne, 2006).

Therefore, given that existing literature highlights a paradoxical articulation of the utility of sport as an educative mechanism, a key purpose of this research enquiry is to examine and illuminate how a specific programme which applies the conventional logic associated with the transformative potential of sport—*Sport for Change*—negotiates the paradoxical nature of ‘sport for good’ programmes. More specifically, the research aims to reveal if, and how, this programme may contribute to social inclusion and citizenship development, or conversely, whether it offers simply a further “technical device that aspires to produce certain outcomes in the conduct of the governed” (Silk & Andrews, 2008, p. 400).

### ***1.3 Presenting the research context—Comic Relief ‘Sport for Change’***

The programme that will form the context for this enquiry—*Sport for Change*—is an initiative funded by the UK-based charity, *Comic Relief*, and is emblematic of programmes designed to

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<sup>2</sup> The metaphor of the ‘Centaur’ refers to the Greek mythological creature which comprised of the head, arms and torso of a human and the body and legs of a horse.

utilise sport as a mechanism to confront an array of social challenges both domestically and internationally (Comic Relief, 2013). Within the UK, *Comic Relief* has contributed £18 million since 2002 toward *Sport for Change* (Comic Relief, 2013), with much of this investment targeted towards the creation of opportunities for young people on the margins of society, primarily to promote social inclusion and incubate elements of citizenship, such as community cohesion and employability (Comic Relief, 2013). Consequently, *Sport for Change*, presents a case that is spatially bound (Gerring, 2004), yet offers potential for exploratory insights which may provide the basis for provisional generalisations to be tendered regarding programmes which possess similar aims (Abma & Stake, 2014; Gerring, 2004). Furthermore, my selection of this case, whilst initially guided by my intrinsic interest of *Sport for Change* (Stake, 1995), was most strongly influenced by the significant potential for learning from this specific case (Abma & Stake, 2014), primarily through the production of thick descriptions of the distinctive features of the programme, which were informed by multiple perspectives, to reveal insights into both meaning and context (Abma & Stake, 2014).

A fundamental component of *Sport for Change* is the integration of specialist, sports-based organisations who enact a pivotal role as delivery partners. Whilst these partners comprise both commercial and publically-funded organisations, it is charity-sector organisations who provide the substantive backbone to the activity-based community work of *Sport for Change* (Comic Relief, 2013; 2010). One example of a charitable organisation who have undertaken development work under the banner of *Sport for Change* is *Access Sport*, a sports-based charity dedicated to supporting volunteer-led community sports clubs to facilitate social change (Access Sport, 2013). Within the initial phase of their project (March 2011 – July 2013) *Access Sport* engaged with 10 community sports clubs across two cities in the UK (London and Bristol), with the primary purpose of creating pathways for young people within these clubs to develop skills and opportunities within education, training and employment (Access Sport, 2013). Within East London—the specific locale for this enquiry—the initial phase of the project witnessed engagement with seven existing and new sports clubs, across five boroughs, who received support, resources and expertise from *Access Sport*. The identified boroughs all displayed indicators of deprivation, with three classified among the most deprived unitary authorities in England (DCLG, 2011). The project engaged with a broad range of sports clubs, all of whom were selected by *Access Sport* on the basis of their dedicated focus on young people. Five of

these clubs offered specific sports provision (bicycle moto-cross (BMX) (n=3); cricket (n=1); judo (n=1)); whilst two offered a multi-sport provision.

#### ***1.4 Realist methodology—a framework for evaluation***

In a deliberate attempt to understand more about the educative worth of sport-based programmes, this enquiry will be informed and guided by a realist evaluative framework (Pawson, 2013; 2006). Diverging from dominant modes of evaluation for sport-based interventions<sup>3</sup> and responding to Coalter's (2007) appeal for a more eclectic array of methodological frameworks to be employed within the monitoring and evaluation of sport policy interventions, this enquiry will adopt realist methodology to present a broader evidence-base pertaining to the efficacy of *Sport for Change*. More specifically, the enquiry will align with, and act upon, recent paradigmatic shifts within the design of social policy, which has gravitated away from a philosophical exercise allied with a specific political ideology, towards a process which is informed and founded upon an evidence-base (Room, 2013; Cartwright, 2009; Biesta, 2007; Coalter, 2007; Pawson, 2006; Solesbury, 2001). At the nucleus of this political movement is the compulsion of policy-makers to locate the elements of a policy intervention that most influence the desired change—or in other words, to identify the aspects of policy that most pertinently contribute to address the question of 'what works?' (Pawson, 2013; 2006; Biesta, 2007; Rogers, 2007; Sanderson, 2002; Solesbury, 2001; Weiss, 1997).

Primarily, and building upon earlier discussion, the ascent of evidence-based policy-making has been established upon an ardent response to the demands of neoliberal governance, and its predilection for accountability and target-driven management (Dean, 2010; Green, 2007; Rose, 2000a). However, whilst some areas of social policy have flourished from this shift (Biesta, 2007), its appropriateness for all policy decisions is questionable, most pertinently when arbitrating in social policy sectors where complex human interaction exists (Room, 2013; Biesta, 2007; Solesbury, 2001). Therefore, evaluative frameworks which possess the agility to make sense of the complex interactions between programme mechanisms, the context for

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<sup>3</sup> Evaluation pertaining to the potential contribution of sport to social inclusion has typically concerned itself with numerical outcomes as the measure of effectiveness based upon methodologically 'pure' frameworks which emphasise quantitative approaches (Coalter, 2007).

intervention, and the resultant outcomes may possess particular merit (Pawson, 2013; 2006; Room, 2013).

One such evaluative framework that reverberates with the ambitions of contemporary policy evaluation is contained within the *realist perspective* (Pawson, 2013; 2006). As an exponent of theory-based evaluation (Weiss, 1997), the rationale for the realist approach is to elicit a deeper appreciation of the sufficient conditions that contribute to programme outcomes (Coalter, 2007; Pawson, 2006) through the development of concisely defined suppositions, professional logic, and practitioner assumptions as to how a programme intervention might generate the envisioned change within its intended population (Room, 2013; White, 2009; Pawson, 2006; Weiss, 1997). These suppositions—or *programme theories*—prescribe how the intervention is designed to work and present extensive scope for more pragmatic evaluative enquiry (Pawson, 2013). Whilst a more nuanced derivation of the programme theory associated with *Sport for Change* will be presented in Chapter 3, in short, the professional logic which infused the implementation of this programme was predicated upon the perceived capacity for sports participation to bestow enhanced social inclusion upon its participants, primarily through the accumulation of three forms of capital—namely, human capital (Becker, 2006), social capital (Putnam, 2000), and positive psychological capital (Luthans, Yousseff & Avolio, 2007)—which, in turn, would enable participants to develop their employability prospects, enhance their educational attainment, and temper the threat of engagement with crime.

One final, yet critical, assumption to divulge before embarking on this investigation, is that this research enquiry will be guided and informed by a physical cultural studies (PCS) sensibility (Silk & Andrews, 2011b; Andrews, 2008). Whilst the constraint of space does not permit for a more detailed articulation of the philosophical assumptions associated with this intellectual project, PCS endeavours to broaden the empirical scope of enquiry beyond the restrictive terminology attached to traditional conceptualisations of ‘sport’ and become inclusive of “physical culture in all its myriad forms” (Andrews, 2008, p. 54). Moreover, PCS is concerned with the interaction of physically active bodies within the social, political and economic contexts that they encounter and inhabit (Silk & Andrews, 2011b), which aligns appositely with the interests of this research enquiry. Critically, and continuing the overlap between this study and the epistemological aims of the PCS project, the intellectual motivation which fuels such research is grounded in the

analysis of physical culture as it intersects the wider social context which moves beyond mere explanation of these relationships but towards an understanding which both captures and articulates how physically active bodies become represented, organised and regulated by the operations of social power (Andrews, 2008). As such, PCS research possesses an emancipatory focus that empowers individuals to confront social injustice and incite imagined possibilities which “produce the type of knowledge through which [research] would be in a position to intervene into the broader social world and *make a difference*” (Silk & Andrews, 2011b, p. 10, original emphasis). It is, therefore, within the spirit of PCS, that this research enquiry will proceed.

### ***1.5 Summary***

This chapter has positioned the complexities and paradoxes inherent within policies which utilise participation in sport as a mechanism to address broader social concerns. Whilst this instrumental application of sport has received vociferous support within government rhetoric, existing academic literature has been more critical, offering repeated invitations to conduct research within this context that is more theoretically grounded and methodologically nuanced in its approach (Coalter, 2013; 2007; Dacombe, 2013). By employing realist methodology (Pawson, 2013) to examine *Sport for Change*, an exemplar of the type of sport-based programme that underpins the logic of government policy, this study will respond to such invitations, and more specifically, endeavour to address two specific research questions:

- i) How does participation in sport contribute to the enhancement of social inclusion for populations who are classified as NEET, or who exhibit characteristics associated with becoming NEET?
- ii) To what extent are sport-based programmes, which are resourced and designed to enhance social inclusion, actually exemplars of neoliberal governance by providing a technical device to control the conduct of identified populations?



Central to addressing these two questions is a coherent theoretical understanding of the key concepts highlighted within this initial chapter, which will provide the conceptual parameters for the investigation that follows. Consequently, Chapter 2 will introduce, articulate, and critically examine existing literature pertaining to the instrumental utility of sport as a means to enhance social inclusion.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Informed by the theoretical constructs articulated within the logic model of *Sport for Change*, the following review of literature will, initially, critically discuss and unpack the concept of social inclusion. In addition, this chapter will offer a theoretical overview of the forms of capital which have been identified as most relevant to understandings which connect socially excluded youth populations with destinations of education, employment or training. Finally, given the conceptual proximity of citizenship with both theoretical articulations of social inclusion and the programme logic of *Sport for Change*, the review will conclude by presenting and examining literature pertaining to this construct. In doing so, the theoretical foundation for the enquiry will be conveyed, and critical points of departure identified, for the ensuing investigation.

### *2.1 Theoretical articulations of social inclusion*

Within the extant academic literature the notion of social inclusion has been referred to as a term which is intrinsically problematic (Levitas, 2005), conceptually vague (Pierson, 2002), possessing ‘shifting meanings’ between academics, policy-makers, and politicians (Levitas, 2004; Oppenheim, 1998; Room, 1995), and as a convenient antonym to social exclusion (Levitas, 2004). For Levitas (2004), such conceptual fluidity serves two political functions. First, it presents a neat compartmentalisation of society into an included majority and an excluded minority and, second, cloaks the complexity of the social inclusion/social exclusion dynamic (Levitas, 2005). Consequently, the simplistic application of these terms fuels the discursively created assumptions surrounding those on the margins of the social order to present “an overly homogenous and consensual image of society” (Levitas, 2005, p. 7).

Clearly, a more robust articulation of social inclusion is essential to provide a conceptual foothold for the scholarly evaluation of initiatives designed to utilise sport as an instrument to promote social inclusion. Following Spandler (2007), central within this ambition is the need to diverge from the conceptual slippage attached to the examination of social inclusion and social exclusion as ‘two sides of the same coin’ towards a more critical treatment of these terms as polar opposites, to unearth the implicit assumptions and potential consequences which discursively obscure existing policy formulation.

That said, much of the initial scholarship in this area embraced the preoccupation of policy with tackling social exclusion, rather than promoting or contributing to understandings of social inclusion (Spandler, 2007; Levitas, 2004). As a departure point for the critical scrutiny of social *exclusion*, the seminal work of Townsend (1979) explores the close association between social exclusion and poverty (Kennedy, 2013; Levitas, 2004). However, for Townsend (1979), poverty, or exclusion, was not expressed purely as the availability of financial resources to sustain basic needs (Kennedy, 2013; Collins, 2009), but also in relation to resources that enable individuals to “participate in the activities...which are customary, or at least are widely encouraged, or approved in societies to which they belong” (Townsend, 1979, p. 31). Consequently, at a conceptual level, social exclusion assumes a blend of social, political, cultural, as well as economic, dimensions (Dacombe, 2013; Burchardt, Le Grand & Piachaud, 2002; Oppenheim, 1998). A similar focus on social, cultural and political relations (or lack thereof) influences the thinking of Room (1995), who defines social exclusion as:

the process of becoming detached from the organisations and communities of which the society is comprised and from the rights and obligations that they embody (p. 243).

For some authors (e.g. Winlow & Hall, 2013; Brent, 2004), conceptions of social exclusion which incorporate this notion of community detachment are exacerbated by the destructive forces of neoliberalism, which have generated an increasingly fragmented version of society—a *post*-social world—constituted by a “milieu of atomised individuals struggling for finger-holds in fields of mere representation” (Winlow & Hall, 2013, p. 2). Consequently, theoretical articulations which have attempted to offer ‘solutions’ to social exclusion (e.g. Hills & Stewart, 2005; Pierson, 2002; Oppenheim, 1998) by advocating for neighbourhood renewal, have, despite their populist attraction, received criticism for their overly generic treatment of the complexities of social exclusion (Evans & Spicer, 2008; Levitas, 2005; Brent, 2004), which overlook the marginalised subjectivity afforded by the constraints of historical, political and economic structures (Winlow & Hall, 2013), and offer a minimalist description of social exclusion as a single entity with fixed boundaries regarding what constitutes marginalisation from the societal mainstream (Levitas, 2005).

Therefore, in an attempt to reify this concept, and present a robust foundation for investigation, the work of Levitas (2005) provides a more concrete framework for the analysis of social exclusion. This analysis, which has dominated previous articulations of the relationship between sport and social exclusion (see Collins & Kay, 2014; Spaaij, Magee & Jeanes, 2013) presents three, overlapping discourses which contrast based upon a delineation of where the boundary for exclusion is positioned. In short, these discourses encompass a *redistributive discourse* (RED) in which social exclusion is defined in relation to poverty and social inequality, and which can be addressed through the redistribution of resources and public services; a *social integrationist discourse* (SID) which prioritises paid employment as the precursor to tackling social exclusion; and a *moral underclass discourse* (MUD) which views the marginalisation of the socially excluded as the consequence of a lack of mainstream values and morality (Levitas, 2005).

The first of these discourses—RED—adopts the traditionalist perspective of social exclusion, which highlights poverty and a lack of material resources as the primary cause of exclusion (Townsend, 1979). Consequently, under RED, ideas to address social exclusion coalesce around the reduction of poverty through the redistribution of universal welfare, not just in terms of financial assistance, but also via public services (Levitas, 2005; 2004). As such, through the redistribution of resources and power, inequality can be addressed and obstacles that restrict active participation in community life can be confronted, to connect notions of social inclusion with equality of opportunity (Levitas, 2005). The RED discourse underpins many of the assumptions which accompany policy and practice in relation to the palliative capacity of sport to address social exclusion, primarily through the enhancement of social capital (Collins & Kay, 2014; Kelly, 2011; Coalter, 2007), via interventions that are typically categorised as social welfare programmes (Hylton & Totten, 2013). More specifically, not only do these programmes contribute to what Collins (2004) has described as “the citizen’s package of expectations” (p. 728), but they also prioritise education within their design (Coalter, 2008), whereby sport is utilised as the ‘hook’ through which issues of inequality can be approached (Nichols, 2007; Frisby & Millar, 2002).

In contrast, SID is concerned with the role of paid employment as the fundamental means for social inclusion (Levitas, 2005). Such a preoccupation necessitates efforts to address social exclusion by focussing attention towards the development of human capital—or the knowledge,

skills, and attitudes which are valued for “their economically productive potential” (Baptiste, 2001, p. 185). Extant research which has examined the correspondence between sport-based programmes and the enhancement of opportunities for paid employment has noted the potential for such programmes to contribute to human capital and as a conduit to work (Kelly, 2011). However, as Levitas (2004) observes, the SID is doubly problematic as it does not account for in-work poverty, a growing concern in the current fiscal climate (Lawton & Thompson, 2013), and largely ignores the gendered distribution of paid employment where the male workforce predominates. Moreover, within the neoliberal present, the resultant service economy that has arisen has removed the demand for manual employment, which traditionally supported the labour market within this population, to make redundant the skills which are present among these marginalised groups, and further undermine the social integration of those without work. (Winlow & Hall, 2013; Willis, 2003).

The final discourse offered by Levitas (2005)—MUD—critiques and deviates from the former discourses of social exclusion by encompassing a social and moral component. More specifically, this discourse is concerned with an *underclass* of society who are culturally and morally distinct from the mainstream (Levitas, 2005), due to their low educational attainment (Levitas, 2005), “disdain for their [social] obligations...[and] identifiably distinctive attitudes towards the family and the labour market” (Jordan, 1996, p. 109). In relation to RED, the moral underclass discourse demonises dependence on government welfare, to identify socially excluded populations as burdensome and as incubators of social contagion (Jordan, 1996). For Winlow and Hall (2013) such discourse reinforces the guiding philosophy of neoliberal governance, offering ‘tough medicine’ to cure the ‘sick body’ that infests a dependency culture. Consequently, policy interventions to address social exclusion within MUD have focussed on tackling the morally undesirable behaviour which portrays this paradigm (Spandler, 2007; Levitas, 2005), by enhancing elements of positive psychological capital, such as resilience and self-efficacy (Luthans *et al.*, 2007). This is particularly noticeable within sport-based interventions, which, under the motif of social control (Hylton & Totten, 2013), further promote the mollifying potential of sport to engage the supposedly morally repugnant in activities which instil the cultural values, beliefs and attitudes accepted within the mainstream (see Banks, 2013; Vinson & Parker, 2013; Kelly, 2011; Nichols, 2007).

Whilst these three discourses of social exclusion are helpful in providing a broader depiction of this concept (Collins & Kay, 2014), and present a coherent framework by which to inform enquiry which seeks to examine the utility of interventions which aspire to tackle social exclusion (Kelly, 2011), Spandler (2007) explains that policy discourse has shifted in recent years away from notions of “tackling social exclusion towards one of promoting [social] ‘inclusion’” (p. 3), based upon the premise that social inclusion is both a human right and a moral imperative (Henderson & Thomas, 2013; Kennedy, 2013; Spandler, 2007). Similarly, for Levitas (2004), social inclusion may be more palatable within the rhetoric of policy on the grounds that it “conjures up an image of a good society...a transformative idea that is...utopian rather than ideological” (p. 50). More specifically, Henderson and Thomas (2013) contend that a focus upon the generation of social cohesion and community participation, two central concerns within the understanding of social inclusion, is more adequate in capturing the essence and subjectivity of marginalised populations, and resonates strongly with the relational aspects of social inclusion/exclusion posited in the literature (see Room, 1995).

Therefore, as a departure point to examine scholarly articulations of social *inclusion*, contemporary understandings have invariably made reference to enabling access to mainstream activity and the generation of opportunities within society, for example paid employment and engagement in aspects of community life, such as leisure (Rankin, 2005). In addition, as mentioned, conceptualisations of social cohesion are also advanced as a central aspect of social inclusion (Henderson & Thomas, 2013; Kelly, 2011; Hoye *et al.*, 2010), where, in both cases, “the redistribution of opportunity” (Kelly, 2011, p. 127) features prominently. Therefore, recent policy rhetoric is littered with examples of the pivotal role that sport can assume in delivering the elements of social inclusion highlighted above,<sup>4</sup> not least because of sport’s propensity to engage the third sector (Farooq, Moreland, Parker & Pitchford, 2013; Harris, Mori & Collins, 2009; Doherty & Misener, 2008; Delaney & Keaney, 2005). In addition, academic literature has highlighted the potential of sport to contribute to social inclusion—most notably in terms of social cohesion—at both the individual level, by enabling the construction of positive relationships between diverse groups (Kelly, 2011), and at a community level, whereby urban regeneration projects typically involve the construction of sport and leisure facilities, which

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<sup>4</sup> For example, in the UK, HM Government (2007) outlines within Public Service Agreement (PSA) 21—*Build more cohesive, empowered, and active communities*—that a key metric within its delivery is the percentage of people who participate in sport, and the provision of a thriving third sector, of which sports clubs and organisations constitute a significant proportion.

become focal points for community events and constructive neighbourhood activity (Hoye *et al.*, 2010).

However, despite this optimism, more critical scholars have leveraged their oppositional rationales against the slippery application of the term social inclusion within policy rhetoric and the limited academic scrutiny to which social inclusion has been subjected (Rose *et al.*, 2012; Spandler, 2007). More pertinently, two specific points of contention have arisen in the literature, which disquiet the increasingly strident hollering of the social inclusion cacophony. First, is the observation that notions of social inclusion within contemporary social policy are inextricably linked with paid employment (Spaaij *et al.*, 2013; Spandler, 2007; Yates & Payne, 2006; Lister, 2000), while second, is Spandler's (2007) contention that existing understandings of social inclusion present a paradox between a genuine desire to promote access and address social inequality with a "form of moral and social governance which reproduces and legitimises the prevailing socio-economic order" (p.12).

To explore the first of these contentions, the obsession with paid employment as an object of social inclusion policy holds obvious attraction given the simplicity and accessibility of (un)employment statistics as a policy metric (Yates & Payne, 2006; Rankin, 2005). Consequently, as Spaaij *et al.* (2013) note, within both EU and UK social inclusion policy a focus on addressing youth unemployment is conspicuous within the ambit of its flagship activities. Underpinning the rationale of the social inclusion-employment nexus is the notion that paid employment offers the financial rewards and status which "promote choice in living one's desired life...and involvement in all potential elements of social life" (Spandler, 2007, p. 7). One example, which reinforces the role of employment in offering control and autonomy, is the Ministerial Foreword within the UK policy document *Positive for Youth* (HM Government, 2011) which highlights how engagement in employment enables young people to "be the authors of their own life story" (p. iv). Similarly, the European Commission (2002) White Paper—*A new impetus for European youth*—states that:

To have a job means adult status, self-respect, money, independence and the opportunity to broaden one's social contacts. Young people who are cut off from work are losing a vital chance to get new perspectives and to integrate into wider society (p. 48).

However, as Spandler (2007) observes, the fixation with paid employment overlooks the 'softer' outcomes that may accrue in relation to a heightened sense of social inclusion, such as improved self-esteem or increased participation in community activities. By revisiting the criticisms of the closely-related social integrationist discourse (Levitas, 2005), Spandler (2007) also argues that the centrality of paid work in articulating social inclusion applies a broad-brush understanding of the sensibilities and subjectivities of the working population. Indeed, as Spandler (2007) notes, the assumptions surrounding paid employment as a precursor to social inclusion may be inaccurate, given that increasingly "people in full time work spend little time on non-work related activities and full time work negatively affects people's ability to socialise, volunteer or help others" (p. 8). Such thinking is fortified by the growing problem of in-work poverty (Philpott, 2014), which clearly impacts the manner in which many within the working population can engage with the supposed benefits afforded by mainstream society (Spandler, 2007).

With regard to the second criticism of social inclusion—namely, the paradoxical nature of this concept—Spandler (2007) argues that the onus of the social inclusion agenda rests firmly with the individual to engage positively with the community, to shroud the way in which enduring social structures and divisions may perpetuate exclusion and impede the potential for some individuals to become socially included. This approach, which eliminates the organising structures of society from the debate, and propels the responsibility for social inclusion upon the individual, resonates cogently with notions which underpin neoliberal governance. Moreover, such disregard for the constraining influence of the social apparatus, which is central to many forms of exclusion, places centre-stage the 'invisible hand' of neoliberalism (Apple, 2001) to construct individuals who are enterprising, accountable and, above all, socially responsible beings (Paton *et al.*, 2012; Dean, 2010; Rose, 2000a). However, as Rose (2000b) notes, a governance of responsabilization "appears to exacerbate, rather than reduce, the division between the included and the excluded" (p. 328). Consequently, for Spandler (2007), whilst existing policy and theoretical conceptualisations of social inclusion may promise emancipation



from the social restraints of marginalisation, it also offers the potential for a “new tyranny...[based upon] social, moral and economic regulation” (p. 12).

Therefore, given the contentious nature of social inclusion, several authors (e.g. Rose *et al.*, 2012; Spandler, 2007; Beresford, 2002) have invited critical debate to better conceptualise social inclusion and, subsequently, provide a more defined point of entry for interventions that may forge it in contemporary society. On this basis, a more nuanced articulation of social inclusion, which relates to the perspectives of a specific population, may be of merit. Consequently, in the context of the present study, understanding what it means to be socially included from the viewpoint of young people, in particular those classified as NEET or RONI, is a clear and salient departure point. For Rose *et al.* (2012), at the heart of most policy for young people is the continued obsession with paid employment as the critical indicator of social inclusion, or its policy associates—namely education and training. Consequently, those young people who are *not* in education, employment or training are typically classified as social excluded (Yates & Payne, 2006).

Despite becoming one of the fundamental metrics of recent social inclusion policy with the UK (Yates, Harris, Sabates & Staff, 2010), at a conceptual level, the term NEET remains nebulous and blurred in its definition (Nudzor, 2010). However, in general, the concept of NEET has been characterised as comprising 16-19 year old people who spend, or are considered highly likely to spend, a significant amount of time not undertaking any form of education, employment or training (Nudzor, 2010; Finlay *et al.*, 2010). Fuelled mainly by political rhetoric, the discourse surrounding the NEET sobriquet has adopted a candidly negative undertone (Nudzor, 2010; Yates *et al.*, 2010; Yates & Payne, 2006) drawing parallels with the moral underclass discourse of social exclusion (Levitas, 2005). Most pertinently, the similarities have been concluded in relation to this category of young person being viewed as lacking aspiration, feckless, or as ‘drop-outs’ from society (Spaaij *et al.*, 2013; Rose *et al.*, 2012; Yates *et al.*, 2010).

According to Strathdee (2013), government policy and strategic approaches to resolving the crisis of NEET young people often cohere around carefully constructed amalgams of

motivational and punishing approaches.<sup>5</sup> Increasingly, motivational strategies have consisted of short-term, employment focussed training which is often incentivised for both the NEET young person and potential employers (Seddon, Hazenberg & Denny, 2013; Spaaij *et al.*, 2013; Strathdee, 2013; Yates & Payne, 2006), where the primary focus is “the transition from NEET to EET destination” (Nudzor, 2010, p. 18). Critics of such motivational strategies have directed their gaze towards the propensity of such programmes to concentrate their energies on the young people who could be most easily transitioned into EET destinations (Nudzor, 2010; Yates & Payne, 2006). Marshalled by the pervasive nature of neoliberal governance, chiefly through its audit culture, these critics argue that whilst motivational strategies may appear to be effective, their fixation with ‘hard outcomes’ (Yates & Payne, 2006), at the expense of assisting those whose needs may be far greater or more urgent (Nudzor, 2010), often limits the extent to which these strategies combat the intricate and often perpetual complexion of NEET status. Similarly, punishing strategies—whilst adopting a diametrically opposed set of processes—further reinforce the ideals of neoliberal governance, primarily through the contractual arrangement which is created by these strategies between the individual and the government (Strathdee, 2013). Moreover, and further aligning NEET status with notions of the moral underclass discourse (Levitas, 2005), the unscrupulous nature of this approach (Nudzor, 2010) “strikes at the heart of the ‘pathologies’ ascribed to welfare populations” (Strathdee, 2013, p. 40).

Consequently, a final strategic approach offered by Strathdee (2013)—the bridging approach—aims to generate social connections which may enable NEET young people to “repair deficits in [their] social capital by...acting as a conduit between employers and job-seekers” (p. 41). Whilst the notions of social capital and the bridging of social connections will be treated in more detail below, in relation to an intervention strategy, the bridging approach coalesces with suggestions within the extant literature, which advocate NEET-focussed programmes to emphasise sustained change within people’s lives (Spaaij *et al.*, 2013; Nudzor, 2010; Yates & Payne, 2006). Furthermore, the foundations for such interventions need to be cognisant of confronting the social barriers which impede access to education, training and employment, and perpetuate the social exclusion that may result (Yates & Payne, 2006), primarily through the

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<sup>5</sup> Motivational strategies relate to activities which encourage the identified population to (re)enter the workforce, primarily through skill development, while punishing strategies principally utilise welfare system reform to force young people into paid employment through reducing welfare dependency or increasing the negative connotations attached to being NEET (Strathdee, 2013).

construction and incubation of mentoring relationships between the young person and an authority figure which is built upon mutuality, acceptance and trust (Rose *et al.*, 2012; Pawson, 2006; Yates & Payne, 2006). Again, the merit of sport-based interventions to create such relationships has been promoted as a site where bridging strategies might flourish (Spaaij *et al.*, 2013) to further amplify the label of benevolence that has been attached to sport as a social panacea.

However, some authors (e.g. Seddon *et al.*, 2013; Rose *et al.*, 2012; Phillips, 2010) have suggested that a focus on reinserting young people into education, training and employment may appear productive and well-intentioned on the surface, but that it also compresses the interpretation of social inclusion into an all-consuming definition and neglects “other spheres of inclusion” (Rose *et al.*, 2012, p. 259), which may offer a more valuable foundation upon which inclusion strategies may be grounded. Therefore, in response, Rose *et al.* (2012) offer an empirically derived understanding which acknowledges how young people identified as NEET conceptualise social inclusion. As a primary indicator of social inclusion, Rose *et al.* identify *acceptance* as an essential component. In short, acceptance refers to a reciprocal sense of respect, acknowledgement and trust, both amidst informal peers, but also—perhaps more importantly—by people perceived to be in power (Rose *et al.*, 2012). Drawing parallels with literature which conceptualises the accumulation of social capital as a critical factor of inclusion (e.g. Phillips, 2010), acceptance and recognition by individuals within socially valued institutions has been found to incubate self-worth and a sense of belonging upon which integration into more conventional notions of social inclusion (which refer to education, employment and training) could be constructed. Similarly, according to Rose *et al.* (2012), the influence of formal social networks and authoritative social institutions is also prominent in the process of exclusion. This is most pronounced in regard to meeting societal expectations, such as obtaining formal qualifications and proceeding to higher education or the employment domain. Therefore, potential exists for social inclusion interventions which encompass alternative understandings of success, and which elevate and value engagement in socially productive activities which reach beyond formal education and paid employment, such as voluntary work in community settings, for example. Moreover, Rose *et al.* imply that the valorisation of other forms of community contribution are beneficial to the process of internalising a sense of social inclusion among young people, and consequently, may forge an alternative disposition towards mainstream values and societal roles in symbiosis with a greater sense of agency over the accomplishment of these ‘preferred roles’.

Consequently, in order to examine the impact of sport-based interventions on social inclusion, an articulation of social inclusion as determined by programme stakeholders is essential. Therefore, invoking Rose *et al.* (2012) as a theoretical framework, the present study will investigate how the concept of acceptance is developed and nurtured between the intended recipients of the intervention and programme staff, and how formal networks within the architecture of programme delivery influence these perceptions of social inclusion. Nevertheless, given that much of the related literature, both academic and professional, centralises the enhancement of various forms of capital as the key to social inclusion, the discussion now turns to an explication of the forms of capital most aligned with the promotion of social inclusion.

## **2.2     *Capital accumulation in the construction of social inclusion***

With respect to the accumulation of capital, existing research which has explored the impact of interventions on NEET populations has tended to focus on the development of three distinct forms: human capital, through the enhancement of skills, knowledge and education (Baptiste, 2001); social capital, in regard to the interpersonal networks and relationships that are created and sustained via the intervention (Phillips, 2010; Coalter, 2007); and positive psychological capital, which encompasses the development of positive personal qualities such as resilience, self-efficacy, hope and optimism (Seddon *et al.*, 2013; Luthans, Luthans & Luthans, 2004).

### **2.2.1   *Human capital***

As mentioned, the extant literature is replete with arguments which correspond social inclusion with paid employment (Spaaij *et al.*, 2013; Kelly, 2011; Spandler, 2007; Yates & Payne, 2006). Uppermost within much of this discussion, particularly in relation to NEET populations, is the notion that employment prospects—and, consequently, social inclusion—may be enhanced through the accumulation of human capital (Kelly, 2011). Consequently, proponents of this view observe that “human capital is by far the most important form of capital in modern economies” (Becker, 2006, p. 292). Theoretical articulations of human capital often cohere around the notion that this form of capital incorporates the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies derived by an individual through education, training and experience (Becker, 2006; Luthans & Youssef, 2004; Baptiste, 2001). In addition, is the underlying assumption that

a meritocratic society exists to enable an individual to benefit accordingly given such investment into the development of human capital (Brown, 2006; Baptiste, 2001). Thus, as Baptiste (2001) discerns, engagement with education by those who desire employment is paramount to socioeconomic mobility. Furthermore, any investment in education is necessary throughout the life-cycle to ensure that skills obsolescence does not become a prospect (Becker, 2006).

In contrast, critics of human capital theory allude to its propensity to dismiss social and structural inequalities (Baptiste, 2001), undervalue the importance of personal relationships and networks within an economic system (Granovetter, 1983), and ignore both the mythical nature of a meritocratic society (Brown, 2006), and the resulting *opportunity trap* (Brown, Lauder & Ashton, 2011) which arises from the “rupturing of the meritocratic link among education, jobs and rewards” (p. 146), that should accrue from investment in human capital. Nevertheless, within the architecture and rhetoric of government policy, the centrality of human capital accumulation, and in particular the development of ‘skills’, remains a prominent feature.<sup>6</sup> Sport-related policy has advanced similar claims, with the EU *White Paper on Sport* constituting how sport may “help develop knowledge, motivation, skills and readiness for personal effort...[to] reinforce Europe’s human capital” (European Commission, 2007, p.5).

However, despite the clear preoccupation with skill enhancement that such policy documents amplify, there is little clarity on the specific aspects of human capital that are necessary to enable the opportunities in further education and employment that such policies purport to achieve. Within the academic literature, some authors have commented on the shifting nature of contemporary skill requirements, based upon advancing technological developments (Becker, 2006), the global economy (Brown, 2006) and the changing nature of the labour force (Winlow & Hall, 2013; Brown *et al.*, 2011), among other mediating factors. For Brown (2006), these factors bring into question the centrality of academic skills as the primary credential of human capital. Conversely, the emphasis has transferred towards ‘softer skills’, such as “personal drive, self-reliance and interpersonal skills” (Brown, 2006, p. 391), as qualities which are valued by

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<sup>6</sup> For example, *Positive for Youth* (HM Government, 2011) and *State of the Nation 2013* (Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, 2013) outline a multiplicity of skills that young people should develop to facilitate employment status, with skills related to personal development, social development, transferability, collaboration, citizenship, communication, decision-making, and business. Similarly, with regard to wider, European Union policy, *Youth on the Move* (European Commission, 2010) prioritised the creation of an economy based upon knowledge, education and skills which meet the needs of the labour market.

employers. Nevertheless, as the policy rhetoric reveals, consensus on the type and abundance of human capital that holds currency within an economy and society that continues to change with such increased velocity, is difficult to ascertain.

In an attempt to anticipate the trends that will shape the future economy and the jobs that will be available within it, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) has offered insight into the skills that might possess currency within the predicted landscape of the next two decades. According to UKCES (2014), the nature of work will become less location-specific, more technologically intensive and encompass an increase in short-term, project-based characterisation. Consequently, the skills and knowledge-base that individuals will require should encompass an interdisciplinary breadth, rather than specialist knowledge, alongside a blend of technical and “softer, collaborative skills...including resilience, adaptability, resourcefulness, enterprise, cognitive skills (such as problem solving), and the core business skills for project based employment” (UKCES, 2014, p. 26).

This shift towards the development of the ‘softer’ skills that are listed above raises two critical points within the context of this study. First, this inventory of softer skills aligns more cogently with an alternative form of capital to human capital—namely, positive psychological capital, which relates to a number of psychological capacities that can be developed for workplace improvement (Luthans *et al.*, 2004). Several authors (e.g. Seddon *et al.*, 2013; Phillips, 2010; Luthans *et al.*, 2004) have advanced this form of capital as fundamental to first, acquiring and sustaining employment at the individual level, as well as, second, contributing to competitive advantage and organisational success at a collective level. Whilst positive psychological capital will receive a more detailed and critical treatment below, at this juncture it is suffice to mention that endeavours to develop this form of capital connect with a second critical point pertaining to the central import of softer skills within the future economy. More specifically, invoking Lauder, Brown, Dillabough and Halsey (2006), the acquisition and development of these softer skills may not necessarily need to be assimilated through and within the formal education system, nor indeed, may formal sites for education be positioned as the optimal locale for such skill procurement. Consequently, and as Seddon *et al.* (2013) have commented, experiential knowledge obtained within community settings, such as those related to sport participation,

offer clear potential to contribute to contemporary and future articulations of human capital—an assumption which the current study explores.

Therefore, to summarise, and building upon arguments offered above, Brown *et al.* (2011) warn of the limitations posed by the central focus on human capital enhancement that rests in the vanguard of much social policy related to young people and social inclusion. For these authors, human capital, like all economic entities, is subject to the laws of diminishing returns, whereby the introduction of more widespread opportunities for education and training have made investment into such activities a necessity rather than a catalyst for social mobility. Consequently, other forms of capital, which mediate beyond the economic simplicity of human capital, may hold stronger premium in enacting forward movement (Phillips, 2010) within society. For Brown *et al.* (2011) the privileges which may be afforded to an individual via the relationships they engender through social interaction—or an individual's aggregate of social capital—may provide a better indication of how social mobility may be decreed.

### ***2.2.2 Social capital***

The academic scrutiny of the influence and nature of social relationships as a means to generate social mobility, primarily through employment, aligns appositely with notions of social capital—a concept which has gained significant traction within recent policy related to social inclusion, citizenship and social regeneration (Coalter, 2007). As a general notion, social capital refers to “social networks based on social and group norms which enable people to trust and cooperate with each other and via which individuals or groups can obtain certain types of advantage” (Coalter, 2007, p. 50). One of the seminal works which explored the impact of social relationships on social mobility is Granovetter's (1973) analysis of micro-level, interpersonal networks and their impact on broader, macro-level concerns. Making similar assertions to Brown *et al.* (2011), Granovetter was concerned with explicating how non-economic factors were actually endogenous to economic processes. Central to Granovetter's thesis was the composition of an individual's social network and, more specifically, the nature and strength of the ties that existed within it, based upon “the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy, and the reciprocal services which characterise the tie” (Granovetter, 1973, p. 1361). Furthermore, Granovetter (1983; 1973) asserted that weak ties between individuals may possess

more potency in providing economic value (for example, social mobility and access to employment) than strong ties. The premise for this contention was that strong ties, founded upon a high-density relational network comprised of similarly-minded, similarly-connected individuals, are restrictive in terms of their potential to utilise the network for economic benefit (Granovetter, 1983). As such, due to the closed nature of high-density networks, the flow of “unique and non-redundant information” (Granovetter, 2005, p. 35) that may enable economic prosperity to ascend becomes significantly limited in supply. Conversely, for Granovetter, (2005) weaker ties act as a metaphorical bridge to facilitate individual connections with a broader array of acquaintances, foster links with previously unknown relational networks, offer more novel information, and unite an individual with a wider world containing a more extensive gamut of opportunities. Consequently, weaker ties, in particular within low socio-economic groups, may be “better sources...in finding a new job or obtaining a scarce service” (Granovetter (2005, p. 34). Building upon this initial theorising, the construct of social capital has emerged as the conceptual driver for debate concerning the role of social relationships in generating social mobility. Despite social capital being a diffuse and contested concept (Coalter, 2007; Adams, 2008), in relation to this enquiry, theoretical articulations of the concept offered by James Coleman (1988), and Robert Putnam (2000) possess most salience.<sup>7</sup>

Coleman’s (1988) work was grounded in developing a deeper appreciation of social action by contributing explanations offered by the discipline of sociology with those presented within the discipline of economics. More specifically, Coleman’s work developed the tenets of these two intellectual streams by accepting the economic view that individuals act independently to maximise their utility, but also recognising that such action is shaped and constrained by the social context (Coleman, 1988). Consequently, Coleman’s approach to conceptualising social capital attempted to respond to the critiques levelled at human capital theorists and proponents,

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<sup>7</sup> Many studies, encompassing a multitude of disciplinary and contextual perspectives, have examined the construct of social capital by utilising the work of Pierre Bourdieu as a conceptual framework for analysis. Indeed, within this research enquiry, aspects of Bourdieu’s work could have presented a salient and critical vantage point from which to examine the accumulation of social capital within the context of *‘Sport for Change’*. For example, the very essence of Bourdieu’s analysis, which endeavoured to comprehend the reproduction of inequalities in society and examine how these inequalities are manifested within opportunities for social mobility through the accumulation of capital that is valorised within a particular field (Coalter, 2007), may have offered one such critical vantage point. Similarly, examining the habitus of the young people engaged by the current study, and how this operates as a guiding logic of practice (Wagg, Brick, Wheaton & Caudwell, 2009) in relation to aspiration and opportunities for social mobility, may have been equally beneficial. Nevertheless, given that the work of Coleman (1988) and Putnam (2000) corresponds more appositely with the foundational work of Granovetter, in particular in relation to the concept of weak and strong ties, these frameworks for analysis have been preferred to those offered by Bourdieu.



that social influences are largely ignored when promoting the economic function of human capital (see Baptiste, 2001). More specifically, Coleman's work considered the influence of social structures, and most pertinently their history and continuity (Granovetter, 1983), on social mobility. By engaging the social, an understanding arose as to how these social structures contribute to the formation of human capital (Luthans & Youssef, 2004), to present a rational strain of social capital (Lewandowski, 2006, cited in Adams, 2008; Coalter, 2007). Invoking theoretical notions developed by Granovetter (1973; 1983), Coleman (1988) scrutinised the ties that inhere between members of a societal structure or network to examine how the strength of these relationships impact upon human capital accumulation and economic activity. Consequently, according to Coleman (1994), these social ties translate into:

a set of resources...that are useful for the cognitive or social development of a young person...and [which] constitute an important advantage for children and adolescents in the development of their human capital (p. 300).

Furthermore, Coleman concluded that for social capital to accumulate, and for efficient economic activity to proceed, the nature of the social relations developed through the various ties within a social network will comprise a series of obligations and expectations between the actors within that network, which are grounded on a sense of trustworthiness. In other words, within the composition of any social structure, a norm of reciprocity is created, based on the level of trustworthiness that exists, which enables and sanctions the expectations and obligations of all individuals within that social structure. As such, any outstanding obligations that one individual within a social structure has for others within the same network will generate a form of 'credit slip' or, for Coleman (1988), "social capital on which they can draw" (p. S103). Coleman (1988) also concluded that the level of closure within a social structure reinforces the normative behaviour within that structure to bolster the trustworthiness which will enable the proliferation of obligations and expectations. As such, communities in which the ties are strong—or close—will permit higher levels of trustworthiness to be generated, and with it a more efficient dissemination of information throughout the network alongside the perpetuation of norms which are more effectively embedded (Coleman, 1988). That said, critics of Coleman often commence their rejoinders at this point of departure, citing the homophilous nature of closed social networks (Lin, 2001), which are often predicated upon social class categories (McNamara Horvat, Weininger and Lareau, 2006). For example, McNamara Horvat *et al.* (2006) observe how Coleman's notion of social capital fails to recognise how homogeneity both serves

and benefits those who may possess an existing wealth of social capital, and further marginalises those without such ties to create “a theory of inequality in social capital” (p. 466).

In contrast, Putnam’s (2000) articulation of social capital was developed in response to what he viewed as a trend towards the absence or obliteration of civic participation, in favour of personal interest, through “a striking diminution of regular contacts...that encourage casual social interaction” (p. 115). Utilising the context of bowling clubs, Putnam sought to understand how social capital could be considered as a form of public good (Coalter, 2008), which could be enhanced through engagement with civic organisations, such as sports clubs, and which, in turn, could be utilised to develop trust between disparate social networks and bind communities together. Consequently, Putnam’s conceptualisation of social capital assimilated the impact of the broader macro-system, and more specifically, how the relational network of one individual interacts with other relational networks to create and facilitate a more complex, yet potentially more dynamic and productive, set of resources on which an individual may draw. Depicting parallels with Granovetter (2005; 1983; 1973), this democratic strain of social capital (Lewandowski, 2006, cited in Adams, 2008), is predicated upon three distinct forms of social capital which can be accumulated via civic engagement—bridging, linking, and bonding social capital (Putnam, 2000). The first of these—bridging social capital—resonates strongly, both in essence and terminology, with the previously discussed notion of social capital offered by Coleman (1988). As Nicholson and Hoye (2008) state, “bridging social capital refers to processes by which the development of social norms, networks and trust through social interaction link...disparate elements of the community” (p. 7). In other words, and to echo Granovetter’s (1973; 1983) articulation of weak ties, this form of social capital encompasses the social ties that are constructed across and between horizontal social divisions (Putnam, 2000). Consequently, membership of, or involvement in, a specific, communal activity, such as sport, may present a conduit through which these horizontal ties may be created. Similarly, the concept of linking social capital possesses both productive and positive connotations, but encompasses greater propensity to forge social mobility given that it promotes vertical connections between diverse social divisions (Nicholson & Hoye, 2008). For Collins (2009), the potential of sport to attract participants from divergent social classes in a common endeavour reinforces the promise associated with this form of social capital in generating the ties which may lead marginalised populations towards greater access and opportunity within the societal mainstream.

However, whilst the initial forms of social capital which underpin Putnam's (2000) thesis present clear prospects for social mobility, the concept of bonding social capital contains a more ominous connotation (Putnam, 2000). Accordingly—and in semblance to Coleman's (1988) conception of closure and Granovetter's (1983; 1973) notion of strong ties—this form of social capital accumulation invokes a tightening of relations within a homogenous group of people (Morgan, 2013), by excluding individuals and groups who are peripheral to the main group, thus restricting the quantity and quality of the social ties which will incubate the accumulation of social capital (Putnam, 2000). Consequently, some critical scholars have suggested that this form of social capital presents a more accurate depiction of the relationship between participation in sporting activities and social capital accumulation, given the propensity of many sports clubs to concentrate their resources on maximising competitive performance through processes of elitism, selection and exclusion (Skille, 2011; Collins, 2010).

Unequivocally, and to echo Nicholson and Hoye (2008), the multifarious nature of sport participation will mediate the extent to which social capital is created, developed and maintained, reinforcing Green's (2008) assertion that sport-based programmes vary dramatically in the function and outcomes that they can deliver. In addition, such thinking adds fuel to the contentions of critical scholars who challenge the uncritically accepted conventions which surround the positive impact of sport on social capital enhancement (e.g. Bloyce & Smith, 2010; Coalter, 2007). Consequently, and in response to these appeals, it would appear salient to examine the role of sport in facilitating social capital accumulation, and furthermore, offer a contribution to the growing literature which attempts to unearth what features of a sporting experience may intensify social capital accrual.

Nevertheless, despite the policy rhetoric surrounding social inclusion in young people displaying an abundance of interventions which concentrates attention on enhancing human and social capital, Phillips (2010) observes that:

many young people possess personal qualities that enable them to be proactive in effecting forward movement...[whose] utilisation does not necessarily depend on contact with other people (p. 494).

A growing number of scholars have classified these personal qualities as positive psychological capital (Seddon *et al.*, 2013; Nudzor, 2010; Phillips, 2010; Luthans, *et al.*, 2007; Luthans *et al.*, 2004; Luthans & Youssef, 2004), with Luthans *et al.*, (2007) noting that a symbiotic integration of psychological capital in conjunction with human and social capital is essential to actualising human potential for employability within the contemporary job market. Indeed, Luthans *et al.* (2007) further assert that simply accumulating more of the traditional forms of capital once considered vital for organisational success is insufficient in accomplishing sustainable sources of competitive advantage that the knowledge economy now demands.

### ***2.2.3 Positive psychological capital***

The basic components of positive psychological capital are the concepts of self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience (Luthans *et al.*, 2007; Luthans *et al.*, 2004; Luthans and Youssef, 2004). Mirroring the argument raised above, the justification for including these four concepts within the composition of positive psychological capital—ahead of several other commonly debated concepts—is founded upon first, the potential of these four concepts to contribute to sustainable competitive advantage within the management domain (Luthans *et al.*, 2007) and second, assertions from within the mainstream psychology literature which identifies these four constructs as central to the development of work motivation (Luthans *et al.*, 2004).

The first component of positive psychological capital—self-efficacy—refers to a level of confidence or conviction in one's abilities to successfully execute a specific or challenging task within a particular context by mobilising the appropriate effort, resources or courses of action to achieve that task (Luthans *et al.*, 2007; Luthans *et al.*, 2004; Luthans & Youssef, 2004). To support its inclusion as a determinant of positive psychological capital, Seddon *et al.* (2013) indicate how self-efficacy has offered a useful measure of an individual's motivation and sense of physical and psychological well-being in relation to their propensity for employment.

Second, the concept of hope is based upon the capability of an individual to develop the means to accomplish their goals, but more importantly, to demonstrate the agency and perseverance to remain committed to these goals by constructing alternative pathways towards them (Luthans

*et al.*, 2007; Luthans *et al.*, 2004; Luthans & Youssef, 2004). Support for this element of positive psychological capital is offered by Phillips (2010), whose findings reveal that a sense of agency provides young people on the margins of society with an inner resource which enables them to generate coping mechanisms to manage their existing situation or develop strategies to move forward.

Third and closely related to hope, is the concept of optimism which relates to how an individual's explanatory style for positive events and outcomes is attributed "to internal, permanent, and pervasive causes, and negative events to external temporary and situation-specific ones" (Luthans & Youssef, 2004, p. 153). According to Luthans *et al.* (2004), optimism is the most pivotal element of the four aspects of positive psychological capital, and perhaps offers a promising point of departure for how sport-based programmes may contribute to the accumulation of positive psychological capital.

Resilience—or the capacity to respond positively to adversity, uncertainty, failure or overwhelming change (Luthans *et al.*, 2007; Luthans *et al.*, 2004; Luthans & Youssef, 2004)—characterises the final element of positive psychological capital. Theoretical conceptions of resilience, adopted from the mainstream psychology literature, postulate how resiliency factors buffer the risk of harm caused by adverse situations and social stressors which may lead to negative outcomes (Zautra, Stuart Hall & Murray, 2010; Zimmerman & Brenner, 2010). Therefore, for populations who experience social exclusion, enhancing resilience has emerged as a key contributor to initiatives which support the progression of skills necessary for education, employment and training (Phillips, 2010).

These four elements of positive psychological capital have gained prominence within recent government policies related to young people. For example, the vision underpinning *Positive for Youth* (HM Government, 2011), places centre stage endeavours to empower young people to cultivate the requisite skills for employment. Among the skills that are listed within this policy is the enhancement of self-efficacy, persistence, and resiliency, with engagement in sport acknowledged as a central mechanism through which these qualities can be attained (p. 36). Furthermore, *After the Riots* (Riots Communities and Victims Panel, 2012) noted how many of

the attributes of positive psychological capital—in particular optimism, hope and resilience—were lacking within individual’s who engaged in the riots that occurred within several English cities during the summer of 2011, with two of the headline recommendations from this report—building personal resilience and infusing hope (p. 7-8)—relating directly to positive psychological capital. In addition, and echoing earlier observations, the intent within these policy documents reflects the indisputable premise which underpins much of the related discourse that engagement in education, employment or training is the conduit for social inclusion.

However, as Phillips (2010) observes, it is also necessary for policy-makers to acknowledge that young people may take pride in additional personal accomplishments that do not directly translate into criteria related to the ‘EET’ agenda. As such, the sole fascination with the accumulation of positive psychological capital in order to enhance economic factors, such as increased employability options, is too limiting to adequately capture the breadth and depth of the positive influence that these qualities might convey (Seddon *et al.*, 2013; Phillips, 2010). For these scholars, the four qualities that constitute positive psychological capital possess a broader, more holistic impact on young people who are excluded from mainstream society. More specifically, Phillips (2010) reports that the intensification of positive psychological capital “makes [young people’s] lives meaningful, enhances their self-esteem and is instrumental in the progress that they themselves consider they have made in their lives...in areas that are significant for young people themselves” (p. 502). Similarly, Seddon *et al.* (2013) observed empirically how a structured employment programme which primarily aims to develop skills for employment, further education or training, may also enhance the components of positive psychological capital to develop a plethora of qualities—for example, more structured employment-seeking strategies, a daily routine, more realistic career plans, and affirmative peer relationships, among others—which “do not conform to ‘official’ criteria” (Seddon *et al.*, 2013, p. 517) as metrics of social inclusion. Conversely, the qualities that Seddon *et al.* (2013) report resonate convincingly with articulations presented by Rose *et al.* (2012) in respect of acceptance and recognition by significant others as the foundation for social inclusion. Such hypothesising is similarly supported by Spaaij *et al.* (2013), who suggest, that whilst tackling the determinants of social exclusion is a demanding proposition, the measurement of initiatives designed to enhance employability needs to be receptive to processes which move beyond the simplistic metric of

job attainment towards more holistic approaches which capture the additional qualities that such programmes deliver.

However, as noted, both the scholarly literature and the policy rhetoric amplify the need for young people, irrespective of social background, to acquire a range of resources—or capital—which will enable them to access and achieve membership within an inclusive society. For marginalised youth populations, the procurement of these various forms of capital becomes more acute, with the accumulation of human, social and positive psychological capital cited as a ‘meal-ticket’ to a more prosperous future—or as the building blocks of the citizenship qualities that will facilitate social mobility. Furthermore, as the policy literature implies indisputably (if uncritically), sport may provide a laudable mechanism through which these forms of capital can be assimilated (see Vinson & Parker, 2013; Lee *et al.*, 2012; Coalter, 2007), to label sport as an activity which possesses an educational component, albeit as a mode of non-formal education. Consequently, the next element of this review explores and critically examines the educational worth that is attributed to sport-based programmes in developing citizenship qualities.

### **2.3     *Sport as a mode of non-formal education in the development of citizenship qualities***

As noted above, despite recent shifts in policy discourse regarding the educational worth of sport in relation to the development of citizenship (Garratt & Piper, 2014; Garratt, 2010; Bradbury & Kay, 2008; Jarvie, 2008; Eley & Kirk, 2002), conceptualisations of citizenship have remained ambiguous and disputed in their articulation (Geboers *et al.*, 2009; Davies, 2000). Indeed, for Westheimer and Kahne (2004), attempts to define citizenship, and subsequently provide a ‘blueprint’ to develop the ‘good citizen’, are often narrowly formulated, ideologically conservative and politically laden. Nevertheless, debates surrounding the conceptualisation of citizenship have cohered around two broad forms. First, are iterations categorised as *passive* forms of citizenship, encompassing notions pertaining to civil obedience (Carr, 1991), individual freedoms, access to civil rights, participation in political activities (e.g. suffrage), and access to educational and welfare systems (Marshall, cited in Woodward, 2014). Conversely, more recent articulations of citizenship have promoted *active* forms of the concept, accentuating democratic engagement (ten Dam *et al.*, 2011) and active participation within the society and communities

to which an individual belongs (Scheerens, 2011), to enable citizens to appreciate and perform the key social tasks of contemporary society (ten Dam *et al.*, 2011) and confront the societal challenges of the day (Lauder *et al.*, 2006; Knight Abowitz & Harnish, 2006).

In an attempt to bridge these contrasting positions, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) offer three distinct conceptions of citizenship which present a concise theoretical framework to examine which aspects of citizenship may be enhanced through participation in sport. The first of these conceptions—the personally-responsible citizen—aligns cogently with articulations of citizenship where a preoccupation with social responsibility and functionality prevail (e.g. ten Dam *et al.*, 2011), and the development of ‘character’ is the primary concern through the prominence of such qualities as honesty, integrity, self-discipline, and hard work (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). However, as Westheimer and Kahne concede, whilst such traits are, undeniably, admirable, the obedient, passive nature of this form of citizenship restricts or limits the extent to which critically-informed reflection and action—the hallmarks of active forms of citizenship—can be grasped. Consequently, these authors encourage educators to pursue two alternative orientations of citizenship—the participatory citizen and the justice-oriented citizen. For Westheimer and Kahne (2004), the participatory citizen is essentially an activist, who demonstrates a more deeply involved sense of community issues and opportunities, with their involvement transcending the basic form of community responsibility described above, towards the creation of deeper “relationships, common understandings, trust, and collective commitments” (p. 242). Alternatively, the justice-oriented citizen prioritises critical and analytical engagement with society, to question and challenge established structures and systems which, historically, have supported social injustice (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

In order to acquire the range of understandings highlighted above, several authors have appealed to those responsible for formal education policy to expose young people to a variety of learning experiences that are embedded in less formal methods of education (e.g. Geboers *et al.*, 2009; Scheerens, 2011; Carr, 1991), or, to invoke Lauder *et al.* (2006), redefine the role of education to one of “learning through life” (p. 57). Such thinking invites citizenship education to transcend its traditional boundaries of the formal, school curriculum and embrace opportunities for learning received through experiences encountered within the wider community (Lauder *et al.*, 2006). Research to support this view is encouraging, if cautious, on the role that extra-



curricular activity provided by organisations and agents within the community can perform in contributing to the citizenship development of young people. For example, in their review of 28 scholarly articles related to citizenship education effects, Geboers *et al.* (2009) highlighted the potential of community-based, extra-curricular activities to engage young people “in meaningful learning and problem solving while dealing with authentic problems” (p. 171). Of these community-based agents, those located under the umbrella term of ‘sport’ have commonly been designated responsibility for developing citizenship qualities (Garratt & Piper, 2014; O’Donovan, MacPhail & Kirk, 2010), leading to some critical scholars to suggest that the instrumental utility of sport has earned a ‘mythopoeic status’ as a panacea for addressing citizenship challenges (Garratt & Piper, 2014; Parker *et al.*, 2014; Dacombe, 2013; Green, 2008; Skinner, Zakus & Cowell, 2008; Coalter, 2007).

Theoretically speaking, sports-based initiatives that are housed within social control modes of intervention resonate strongly with the development of the personally-responsible citizen espoused by Westheimer and Kahne (2004), whereby qualities such as honesty and law-observance are foregrounded. Mirroring the sentiments of Paton *et al.* (2012), whereby “citizenship is conditional on responsible conduct” (p. 1474), Dean (2010) infers that the onus on individual responsibility corresponds strongly with notions of the neoliberal governance experienced in many advanced industrial societies. Consequently, such initiatives have proven popular with governments, in particular during episodes of urban community unrest (Hylton & Totten, 2013), within locales perceived to be problematic (Paton *et al.*, 2012),<sup>8</sup> or as a rehabilitative mechanism for those in custody (Parker *et al.*, 2014), and have, accordingly, received healthy financial support for their implementation (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Moreover, the utility of sport to develop citizenship in this manner is indicative of technologies designed to govern the pathologized (Paton *et al.*, 2012) and further reflect the shift towards more neoliberal forms of citizenship, which encompass autonomization and responsabilization as key tenets of a reimagined citizenry (Rose, 2000a).

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<sup>8</sup> For Paton *et al.* (2012), narratives pertaining to problematic locales are indicative of neoliberal discourses which often refer to urban residential estates as “unproductive spaces” (p. 1471), which are populated by classes of people who are morally and economically deficient.

Conversely, some authors (e.g. Lee *et al.*, 2012; Lyras & Welty Peachey, 2011; Lawson, 2005) have suggested that initiatives which align more with social welfare provision (Hylton & Totten, 2013) may be salient to the enhancement of active citizenship, noting correspondence between the skills which may be developed through such programmes (e.g. decision making and problem solving skills, tolerance towards others) (see Green, 2008) and the requisite understandings that underpin the aforementioned articulations of active citizenship. Whilst many social welfare sport interventions possess components which also align with more passive forms of citizenship (Green, 2008), other theoretical frameworks have indicated the potential of sport to transcend citizenship development towards the tenets of more active forms which foreground deeper, more critical engagement with both the community and its associated challenges (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). As one example, Lyras and Welty Peachey (2011), through their Sport-for-Development Theory (SFDT), suggest that sport-based programmes which offer both educational and cultural enrichment, alongside the creation of community-based engagement which coheres associations between the sporting experience and ‘real life’, hold clear potential for active citizenship construction. Moreover, Lyras and Welty Peachey (2011) advocate for sporting experiences which promote inclusivity, participation, and personal and moral development; features which challenge traditional understandings of ‘sport’, where success in competition and performance improvement are primary objectives (Morgan & Bush, 2014). Indeed, as Green (2008) remarks, often “the programmes that seem to be most effective are those that do not look like traditional sport programmes” (p. 133).

However, despite attempts to offer empirically deduced support for the social benefits of participation in sport, reductionist approaches which merely simplify the programme components that may be attributable to citizenship development, often lack the sufficiency to capture the complexity which accompanies the implementation of interventions into an already crowded social policy milieu (Room, 2013). In other words, to reduce the elements of sport-based programmes which emphasise a social change agenda into neatly compartmentalised principles, treats such programmes as “a unitary experience...[which confers]the same benefits to all participants no matter what the programme or context” (Green, 2008, p. 136). Indeed, as Coalter (2007) reminds us, the experience of sport is not homogenous or standardised for all participants. Therefore, in order to ensure that the potential social impact of sport is not undervalued or underleveraged (Dacombe, 2013; Lee *et al.*, 2012), more nuanced understandings

of how participation in sport bestows certain social benefits, such as the development of active citizenship qualities, is necessary.

Nevertheless, according to Coalter (2013), in addition to the generalised (mis)application of sport in expounding social benefits, there are further issues which limit the extent to which sports-based programmes can be implemented as a fundamental aspect of citizenship development. Uppermost within this concern is the limited academic research to provide robust evidence to support such claims (Dacombe, 2013; Coalter, 2007). Previous studies which have attempted to explicate the distinctive nature of the sporting experience and its beneficial effect on social outcomes have focussed on the type of sporting activity that is offered (Green, 2008; Coalter, 2007), the nature of the participative role that is undertaken (Skinner *et al.*, 2008), and the manner in which recruitment to the sport activity has arisen (Coalter, 2013). With regard to the type of sporting activity that is experienced, Coalter (2007) outlines how sports can be categorised into individual, partner, or team sports, each of which contain varying levels of physical contact, possess differences in the need for motor-driven or perceptual skills, and even vary in orientation in respect of competitive focus. The literature indicates that sport participation that favours collective involvement (i.e. partner and team sports) may incorporate more potential to produce the qualities of active citizenship such as relationships, social connections and trust between participants (Coalter, 2013; Green, 2008; Skinner *et al.*, 2008; Harris, 1998). Furthermore, in respect of the nature of the sport participation, the extant literature has been dominated by studies which examine active participation in sport, where the subjects of the research are the intended recipients of the sport-based interventions. Whilst such research has presented inconclusive findings (Coalter, 2013), other scholarship has indicated that ‘non-playing’ participation (e.g. coaching and administrative roles within a sports club) encompass experiences which may enhance citizenship qualities (see Harris, 1998). Finally, in relation to the recruitment of participants to sport-based programmes, Coalter (2007) argues that the propensity for sport participation to be based on self-selection and voluntary engagement suggests that the positive social benefits of sport can be exaggerated. Research which examines targeted recruitment to sport-based programmes is sparse, however Kelly’s (2011) empirical findings infer that the impact of targeted programmes may only assuage the problems associated with social exclusion rather than contribute substantially to citizen development. Clearly, studies which examine targeted recruitment to sport-based programmes are necessary to better understand the sufficient conditions which accompany sport’s capacity

to develop active citizenship (Coalter, 2013). Therefore, in summary, there is scope within the present study to delineate the nature of the sporting experience—based upon initial recruitment to the programme, the type of sport that is engaged, and the role that is assumed—to determine the impact on citizenship development and consequently, factors related to enhanced social inclusion.

## **2.4 Summary**

The review of literature undertaken within this chapter has offered a critical overview of the central concepts which underpin this study. Furthermore, this chapter has identified gaps within the extant literature to present potential openings for further investigation which may contribute to the theoretical development of these concepts. More specifically, in relation to the construct of social inclusion, this chapter has noted how conceptual understandings are largely under-developed, with much of the existing literature, in particular within sport, focussing attention upon the related concept of social exclusion. Similarly, in relation to understandings of the three forms of capital discussed within this chapter—human; social; and positive psychological—much of the literature has concentrated upon correspondences between participation in sport and the development of social capital, with limited research undertaken as to how such participation may initiate the accumulation of human capital, and less still in relation to the acquisition of positive psychological capital. Finally, existing research that has examined the educative worth of sport participation on the development of citizenship qualities has been limited by its propensity to treat sport as a unitary experience (Green, 2008) rather than one that is differentiated, and which may confer opposing outcomes for divergent populations (Coalter, 2007).

Nevertheless, despite this chapter presenting potential points of entry to further understand these concepts within the context of sport participation, some scholars (e.g. Dacombe, 2013; Coalter, 2007; Pawson, 2006) have argued that such theoretical development is restricted by the methodological frameworks which have dominated existing research in this area. More specifically, these critics advocate that theoretical development is contingent upon the deployment of research methodologies which possess the rigour, agility and contextual awareness to understand the distinctiveness of sport-based programmes, such as *Sport for Change*,

and offer nuanced insights that not only develop conceptual understanding but which also inform future programme design more sufficiently (Coalter, 2007). Consequently, the study will now turn attention towards the methodological assumptions that underpin the work, the practices that were employed, and the challenges that were encountered in researching the correspondences between participation in *Sport for Change* and the enhancement of social inclusion.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The following chapter outlines the processes and practices that were undertaken during the course of this investigation and critically reflect upon the research design (Creswell, 2009). However, my aims for this methodology are to exceed these narrow traditions to first, provide justification for the selection of realist methodology as the most appropriate guiding framework to investigate the context for this enquiry, and second, offer a self-reflexive articulation of the methodological tensions and challenges that I confronted ‘in the field’, most notably those pertaining to my academic privilege and enquiry conducted in disadvantaged communities with youth populations who experience, or are pervasively threatened by, the stigma of NEET status.

### *3.1 Positioning the realist perspective*

Much recent debate has centred on identifying the ‘optimal’ methodological approach by which to generate appropriate evidence to inform policy design, evaluate policy impacts, and better understand the complexities of the policy landscape (Room, 2013; Pawson, 2013; Cairney, 2012). As one perspective, Coalter (2007) argues that if the objective of research is to inform progressive policy development, then the extent to which the methodological framework exposes the sufficient conditions of an intervention becomes of paramount concern. Whilst a multiplicity of methodological positions have been proposed and adopted to examine policy interventions, each with their own epistemological and ontological assumptions, Pawson (2013) has categorised the approaches to analysing and evaluating complex policy interventions into four broad perspectives: (i) the augmented trials perspective; (ii) the systems perspectives; (iii) the critical realist perspective; and (iv) the pragmatist perspective.

The augmented trials perspective is informed principally by successionist models of causality (Pawson, Greenhalgh, Harvey & Walshe, 2005), whereby evidence is generated by simple cause and effect conclusions, primarily through the application of quantitative methods and metrics, to produce generalizable results (Cartwright, 2009; Gough, 2004). The appeal of such methodological approaches can be summarised by their capacity to transmit the output of policy interventions and deliver the ‘indisputable killer facts’ on which to premise future policy decisions (Coalter, 2007), which has elevated them to the ‘gold standard’ of research methodologies, most notably within the eyes of policy-architects (Silk, Bush & Andrews, 2010;

Murray, Holmes & Rail, 2008; Denzin & Giardina, 2006; House, 2006; Gough, 2004; Lincoln & Canella, 2004; Ryan & Hood, 2004). However, critics cohere their arguments around the restrictive nature of these methodologies, which oversimplify, approximate and underestimate the complex, intangible and often elusive composition of the policy landscape (Room, 2013), to suggest that such approaches lack the sufficiency to fully comprehend the extent of policy efficacy (Pawson, 2013; Lincoln & Canella, 2004). In response, a polar opposite standpoint is assumed by proponents of the systems perspective, which attempts to articulate the impact of the complex and pluralistic policy landscape to a level of theoretical abstraction which embraces the intricacies of a policy intervention yet elevates the intellectual scrutiny of it to a heightened branch of debate (Pawson, 2013). However, for Pawson (2013), this raised level of abstraction “multiplies rather than solves the complexity burden” (p. 59), resulting in such approaches becoming too conceptually remote to operate meaningfully at the practitioner level (Pollitt, 2008; May, 2006).

Consequently, space exists for policy evaluation which offers a ‘middle ground’ between these two extremes that is cognisant of the context under review yet offers the specificity and pragmatism to inform policy (Byers, 2013; Pawson, 2013; Room, 2013; Murray *et al.*, 2008; Sanderson, 2002). As an embarkation point for this pursuit, some scholars (e.g. Silk *et al.*, 2010; Murray *et al.*, 2008) have advanced that more critical forms of enquiry need to be adopted, first, to raise foundational questions about what constitutes ‘good evidence’, and, second, to encourage multi-method approaches which utilise inter-disciplinary perspectives that align with the context under investigation.

Approaches to policy evaluation which reside within the critical realist perspective have been proposed as possessing such potential to bridge the highlighted paradigmatic divide and illuminate the underlying factors which influence social structures (Byers, 2013; Zachariadis, Scott & Barrett, 2013). Founded on the work of Bhaskar (1978), critical realism is concerned with extracting the underlying, or *generative*, mechanisms which organise the observable and uniform aspects of a social phenomenon (Pawson, 2013; Bhaskar & Lawson, 1998; Bhaskar, 1978), primarily through theory-driven evaluation (Weiss, 1997) which supplies the conceptual parameters for knowledge creation (Pawson, 2013). Proponents of critical realism have specified the salience of generative models of causality (Room, 2013; Pawson *et al.*, 2005), in

offering a richer, more nuanced, yet practical understanding of the programme under investigation, to better reveal its sufficient conditions. Moreover, critical realist evaluation may indicate where best practice is evident within programme design or where caution about the efficacy of certain mechanisms (like sport) should be exercised (Coalter, 2007; Pawson *et al.*, 2005). However, for critical realists, only empirical observations that are able to occur within closed-system settings are considered real<sup>9</sup> (Zachariadis *et al.*, 2013)—a luxury not afforded by the messy, complex and reflexive environment into which policy interventions are launched (Room, 2013; Cairney, 2012)—which ultimately restricts the prospects of critical realist perspectives in understanding sufficiently the efficacy of policy interventions.

Therefore, a final approach offered by Pawson (2013)—the pragmatic perspective—invites enquiry that adopts and adapts the method(s) best suited to the complexity and purpose of the specific evaluation (Pawson, 2013; Sridharan, Platt, Hume & Nakaima, 2013). Drawing parallels with the appeal from Silk *et al.* (2010) for methodological pluralism, the pragmatic perspective invites policy evaluation which is approached from the viewpoint of the *bricoleur*<sup>10</sup> (Pawson, 2013), whereby the researcher selects the optimal method from the multitude of options available within the methodological toolbox (Bush, Silk, Andrews & Lauder, 2013; Pawson, 2013). Advocates of this approach highlight the manner in which the complexity of the context is accounted for, with cultural and historical influences paramount to the investigation (Bush *et al.*, 2013; Sridharan *et al.*, 2013; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). However, as Pawson (2013) intimates, pragmatic approaches can be cumbersome in their application and may only be able to provide piecemeal or partial insight into the efficacy of policy interventions. Nevertheless, as an approach to evaluating complex policy interventions, the pragmatic perspective offers much promise, most notably as first, it acknowledges the influence of contextual conditions and, second, it identifies the necessity for evaluation to examine generative mechanisms through theory-based approaches, as the means to unearth the sufficient conditions which lead to better informed policy design (Sridharan *et al.*, 2013; Coalter, 2007; Weiss, 1997; 1995).

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<sup>9</sup> For Bhaskar (1978), for a generative mechanism to exhibit a depth of realism which could be considered ‘real’, three distinct ‘domains of the real’ need to be satisfied. The first domain (the empirical) is realised when observation of a normic tendency is experienced or perceived; the second (the actual) when such empirical observations are actualised through repeated sequences of events; and the final domain (the real) when these sequences of events can be reproduced under controlled, closed-system conditions (Zachariadis *et al.*, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> The term ‘bricoleur’ was coined by Claude Levi-Strauss and refers to a handyman or one who creates by utilising whatever materials are available.



As mentioned, one specific incarnation of an evaluative framework that resonates with these ambitions, falls under the banner of the *realist perspective* (Pawson, 2013; 2006). Philosophically speaking, the realist approach extends, but also diverges from, the more traditional perspectives offered above as it aspires to evaluate complex policy interventions and inform policy design through conceptual, rather than instrumental, means (Sanderson, 2002). Indeed, as Pawson (2006) contends, the starting point for policy evaluation which utilises realist methodology is enlightenment, where “research on policy occurs through the medium of ideas rather than of data” (p.169). Consequently, within the realist approach, evidence becomes the bedrock to inform ideas, rather than as the sole, unquestioned determinant of policy direction. Consequently, the focus of realist review is not to engender technocratic or partisan support for policy ideas via objectively-generated data (Pawson, 2006; Sanderson, 2002), but to contribute to the architecture of policy and programme design by illuminating and critically examining both the positive and negative potentialities of such programmes. In addition, realist-infused evaluation seeks to invite debate, discussion and reckoning of the key policy issues, as opposed to arbitrating on policy decisions through “thumping fact” (Pawson, 2006, p.169).

A further, and critical, methodological advantage of the realist perspective is the prominence afforded to the ‘context’ for intervention within the research process. For Pawson (2013), this prominence enables the research to become immersed in exposing “what is it about a programme that works, for whom, in what circumstances, in what respects, over which duration?” (p. 15). As such, the signature argument of the realist approach is to elicit specific, not to mention pragmatic, insights into how configurations between context, mechanism and social outcome influence policy efficacy (Pawson, 2006; Sanderson, 2002). Consequently, as Pawson *et al.* (2005) contend, realist evaluation presents a compelling logic of enquiry which advances prospective as well as retrospective viewpoints, advocating illumination and enlightenment over technicality and partisanship (Sanderson, 2002).

However, despite the clear rationale and obvious benefits that realist evaluation may accrue, this methodological approach is not without critique. More specifically, theory-based evaluative frameworks have been decried for the manner in which the utilisation of theory, as the source of evaluation, risks an oversimplification of the ‘promise’ that any policy intervention can articulate (van der Knapp, 2004). Consequently, the application of theory in offering a

generalizable, frame of reference (Weick, 1979) may constrain the breadth of such enquiry, primarily by neglecting the likely contamination of human subjectivity that interventions are susceptible to. Consequently, a simplicity-complexity dichotomy (Stufflebeam, 2001) is created which may impede endeavours to “distinguish the significant from the trivial” (van der Knapp, 2004, p. 19). A second, related, critique asserts how the practice of theory-based evaluation often foregrounds the voices of the “local elite” (Carvalho & White, 2004, p.143) to distort the evidence which is generated. Critics argue that such foregrounding occurs most prevalently within the development of programme theories which are generally founded upon the professional logic of those at the apex of the intervention hierarchy (van der Knapp, 2004), as opposed to those situated at the margins of the policy implementation chain. Finally, van der Knapp (2004) argues, the origins of realist evaluation, which ascribe to the development of concisely stated programme theories (Weiss, 1997), are questionable given the propensity of policy makers to devise indecisive, misguided or ill-informed objectives and outcomes for policy interventions to attain (Coalter, 2007; van der Knapp, 2004). Indeed, within the territory of sport-based interventions, the inclination of policy-architects to overstate the palliative capacity of sport to address numerous social dilemmas (Dacombe, 2013; Coalter, 2007), may obfuscate the development of incisive programme theories, and lead to evaluations conducted on elementary, simplistic, partial, or even erroneous thinking (Weiss, 1997).

As a riposte, proponents of realist approaches acknowledge the inherent technical and conceptual challenges that exist, yet suggest that their circumvention can be performed by enquiry which is shrewd, flexible, agile, welcoming of contextual complexity and able to bridge the tensions between real-world practitioners and policy-makers (Room, 2013; Pawson, 2006)—the hallmarks of realist evaluation. Moreover, as Pawson (2013) contends, no methodological framework is able to vanquish all aspects of a complex intervention to present the ‘magic bullets’ that policy-makers thirst. Consequently, for van der Knapp (2004):

policy makers and evaluators alike have the moral duty to pursue intelligent policy: policy that focuses on influencing social development in a well-considered and well-balanced manner...A well-balanced theory-based approach to policy and evaluation [is necessary], i.e. one that is true to focal objectives and programmes, provides but also draws attention to the context-specific diversity of stakeholders’ interests and preferences (p. 30).

Given the modest, explanatory aspirations of the realist perspective—namely, to examine variation in policy intention, interpretation and implementation (Rogers, 2007); to portray a more complete canvas of the policy landscape by engaging a more extensive array of perspectives (White, 2009); and to explore the impacts that are discrete to the generative mechanisms which underpin a policy intervention, (Pawson, 2013; 2006)—infers that the pursuit of ‘intelligent’ policy design and evaluation (van der Knapp, 2004) is within the grasp of realist approaches (Rogers, 2007; Weiss, 1997), positioning it as the most appropriate form of evaluative framework to this specific enquiry.

The initial phase of realist methodology encompasses the formation of an explicit, refined and cogent logic model (Pawson, 2006; Weiss, 1997; 1995), which presents a diagrammatic of the intended configurations between the context, generative mechanisms, and outcomes of the intervention, to provide the “prospective explanatory agenda” (Pawson, 2006, p. 81) through which enquiry proceeds and is guided. Following Pawson (2006), a logic model for the *Sport for Change* intervention was produced (see Figure 1), which integrated an initial scoping of the intervention context, critical engagement with relevant literature, from both academic and professional sources, and face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with personnel associated with the delivery of the intervention.

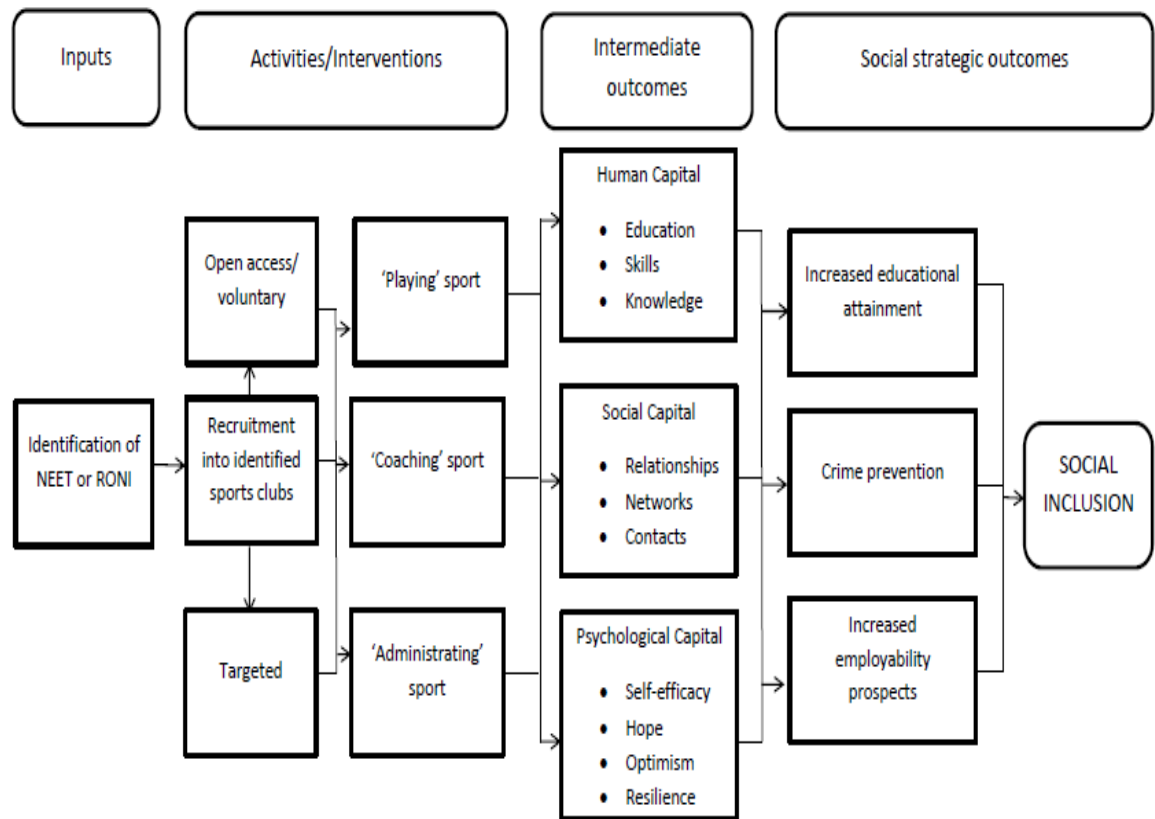


Figure 1: Logic model of *Sport for Change*.

Briefly, the logic model infers that participation in sport by young people classified as NEET, or at risk of displaying indicators of NEET status (RONI), can engender social inclusion, by virtue of enhancing employability prospects, obtaining educational or vocational qualifications, or by reducing the likelihood of engagement with crime or anti-social behaviour. Furthermore, the logic model assumes that these three outcomes can be attained through the acquisition and accumulation of three forms of capital—namely, human capital (Becker, 2006), social capital (Putnam, 2000), and positive psychological capital (Luthans, *et al.*, 2007). Informed by this programme logic, this research enquiry intends to examine how participation in sport contributes to the accrual of these three forms of capital, which, the logic model surmises, will promote increased social inclusion. More specifically, the logic model recognises that participation in sport comprises various guises, with some young people assuming roles in sport related to coaching or the administration of community clubs, in addition to the more traditional forms of participation which involve ‘playing’ the sport. Consequently, the research endeavoured to locate what type of sporting involvement may best contribute to capital

accumulation and, following Coalter (2013), explore how the initial recruitment to *Sport for Change* influenced the presumed capital gains.

### ***3.2 Research design—negotiating the paradigmatic border***

Given that realist approaches are rooted within the ontological and epistemological traditions of critical realism (Byers, 2013; Pawson, 2013), the philosophical foundations for the design of this research enquiry were informed accordingly. However, critical realism, as a philosophical position, operates at the border of the interpretivist/positivist divide (Grix, 2010), thus muddying and problematizing a distinct epistemological location. As noted, for many in the research community, the prominence afforded to randomized controlled trials, as the ‘gold standard’ within the hierarchy of evidence, offers a simplistic solution to this tension (Pawson, 2013; Silk *et al.*, 2010; Denzin & Giardina, 2006; Lincoln & Canella, 2004). However, as Pawson (2013) infers, even the most ardent supporters of randomised controlled trials have acknowledged that the objectified, quantified knowledge generated by positivistic approaches may become misleading or meaningless without guidance from qualitative knowledge. Consequently, this concession has stimulated Pawson (2013) to remark that evaluation science is presented with a “clarion call to scavenge for evidence of all forms, quantitative and qualitative” (p. 11). Accordingly, interpretivist research design, incorporating detailed qualitative enquiry, appears particularly apposite within investigation which seeks to understand the subjectivity of active agents within a given context (Grix, 2010). In an attempt to classify such enquiry paradigmatically, Grix (2010) offers the notion of ‘hard interpretivism’, while Pawson (2013) adopts the term ‘qualitative realism’. In both cases, the authors signpost the epistemological subtleties associated with conducting evaluation research—more pertinently, the need to generate rigorous evidence which is external to the individual (Byers, 2013), yet derive it simultaneously through the fluid and agile methodological arsenal which is bestowed by the emergent research design associated with qualitative work (Denscombe, 2010; Creswell, 2009; Flick, 2009).

Therefore, this research enquiry adopted a non-experimental design (Rutterford, 2012; de Vaus, 2001), incorporating a blend of case study and retrospective strategies of enquiry (Flick, 2009; Creswell, 2009). The appropriateness of case study as the primary strategy within the research

design is supported by the overarching ambitions of the enquiry; namely, an analysis of *Sport for Change*, a specific case, which is bounded by time and activity (Creswell, 2009; Gerring, 2004), of which I have attempted to explore and understand within the confines of its implementation (Rutterford, 2012; Flick, 2009; de Vaus, 2001). More specifically, given that *Sport for Change* typifies the professional logic of ‘sport-for-good’ programmes (Collins, 2010), it presents an exemplar case of an intervention which can be explored through naturalistic case study research<sup>11</sup> (Abma & Stake, 2014). Consequently, as Abma and Stake (2014) observe, emic issues pertaining to the programme were identified, the influence of history and context were considered, and the efficacy of the programme was understood from a more holistic vantage point. However, following Abma and Stake (2014), the selection of naturalistic case study research, and more pertinently, this specific case, derived from its potential for thick description of the case, to portray a ‘patchwork’ of perspectives which “reveal[ed] the universal in the particular” (p. 1160). Whilst case study research is restricted by its propensity to offer limited generalisations (Rutterford, 2012; Flick, 2009), the modest ambitions of the realist approach in offering insight into the discrete generative mechanisms of the programme in question (Pawson, 2006), implies that this potential methodological limitation becomes largely redundant.

In addition, the study incorporated a retrospective strategy of enquiry (Flick, 2009), conducted between January 2014 and March 2015, which garnered reflection upon the initial implementation of *Sport for Change* (March 2011 – July 2013). This retrospective vantage point enabled multiple stakeholders of the programme to offer first-hand accounts pertaining to events and processes associated with *Sport for Change*, which were “analysed in respect of their meaning for the individual” (Flick, 2009, p. 136). Whilst these collective biographical perspectives may have been constrained by an overlapping of the past with the present (Flick, 2009; Johnson, Chambers, Raghuram & Tincknell, 2004), this strategy enabled the research participants to utilise the benefit of retrospection to better comment upon the transformative impact, if any, that *Sport for Change* conferred upon the programme’s recipients.

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<sup>11</sup> Naturalistic case study research aims to understand the particularities of case under investigation within the ordinary setting and natural habitat of the programme under scrutiny. Its practice is typified by minimal intervention on the part of the researcher, and conversational methods of enquiry which follow the issues and circumstances as they emerge (Abma & Stake, 2014).

### ***3.3 Research participants and sampling***

In accordance with realist methodology, to ascertain which programme mechanisms have most salience in identifying what works within a complex intervention, the research sought to generate data from successive layers of the chain of implementation via multiple stakeholders associated with *Sport for Change* (Pawson, 2006). Consequently, the research participants (summarised in Table 3.1 and 3.2) consisted of the Project Lead of *Sport for Change* at *Access Sport*, the sport-based charity who facilitated this specific iteration of the *Comic Relief* project; club leaders and coaches representing all seven of the community sports club who were recipients of funding and resources through the project (n= 8); young males who were members at two of the identified sports clubs (n= 10); and representatives of two organisations who were integral to the project by offering training programmes, apprenticeships or employment opportunities to young people who were members of the identified sports clubs (n= 3) (see Appendix IV for more detailed portraits of these participants).

These purposively determined research participants (Seale, 2012) concentrated attention upon first, the club leaders and coaches at the front-line of project delivery, alongside, second, the young people identified as intended beneficiaries of the project. This self-reflexive decision responded directly to criticisms which contend that theory-based evaluations often amplify only the voices of the “local elite” (Carvalho & White, 2004, p. 13) rather than consult the members of a community most affected by the intervention. Mirroring Lipsky’s (2010) conception of the street-level bureaucrat, the reflexive selection of club leaders and coaches enabled the essence of their dynamic, yet direct, interaction with the youth population targeted by *Sport for Change* to be captured. Furthermore, by engaging representatives of all of the London-based clubs involved within *Sport for Change*, a breadth of insights was garnered from these information-rich cases (Patton, 2002), to ensure that all perspectives on the programme were integrated into the enquiry. The club leaders and coaches were recruited via an initial gatekeeper (the Project Lead of *Sport for Change* at *Access Sport*) utilising a combination of non-probability sampling techniques (Seale, 2012), most pertinently network or chain-referral sampling<sup>12</sup> (Seale, 2012; Heckathorn, 1997). Given that an enduring, private relationship existed between the sports-based charity and the identified sports clubs, access to this specific sample presented few problems. Whilst it

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<sup>12</sup> A sampling technique where respondents are drawn from “the social network of existing members of the sample” (Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004, p. 200).

is possible that this existing relationship, which was ingrained with the transference of resources to support the sports-based project, may have influenced the resultant data, this facilitative network (Walsh, 2012), provided critical insight into the implementation of the project at the delivery level (Pawson, 2006).

<b>Name*</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Organisation/Club*</b>
Amber	Programme Leader of <i>Sport for Change</i>	Access Sport
Alan	Head Coach	Central Judo
AJ	Coach	Footjam BMX
Luca	Head Coach	Fliers BMX; Eagles BMX
Michael	Club Leader	Glynmore Youth Club
Malcolm	Club Leader	Glynmore Youth Club
Bobby	Youth Manager	Napier Park Cricket Club
Zaem	Hub Leader	Victoria Multi-sport Hub
Musaid	Coach	Victoria Multi-sport Hub
Keziah	Partnerships Manager	Capital Connect
Bryony	Partnerships Officer	Capital Connect
Jim	Founder	Spokes

Table 3.1: Delivery partners and club research participants (\* Pseudonyms used)



<b>Name*</b>	<b>Sport</b>	<b>Club*</b>
Faizel	BMX	Eagles BMX
Mehtin	Boxing	Glynmore Youth Club
Jay	Boxing	Glynmore Youth Club
Terrence	Football	Glynmore Youth Club
Jamie	Boxing	Glynmore Youth Club
Noel	Football	Glynmore Youth Club
Ben	Football	Glynmore Youth Club
Dwayne	Football	Glynmore Youth Club
Thaqib	Boxing	Glynmore Youth Club
Majeed	Boxing	Glynmore Youth Club

Table 3.2: Youth participants (\* Pseudonyms used)

The integration of the other key population (i.e. the young people in receipt of the programme), provided additional, self-reflexive intention to further silence the political contestations raised above, by positioning young people in the vanguard of the investigation and giving voice to those situated at the margins of the implementation chain. However, access to this population proved more problematic, indicative of the challenges faced when recruiting research participants from ‘hidden populations’ (Sridharan *et al.*, 2013; Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004; Scott, 2004; Heckathorn, 1997).<sup>13</sup> Unquestionably, the close association between *Sport for Change* and the twin concepts of social exclusion and NEET-ness, both potentially stigmatising classifications in themselves, served to exacerbate the challenges of recruiting from this sample.

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<sup>13</sup> According to Heckathorn (1997), ‘hidden populations’ are typically characterised by undefined boundaries for the population, alongside membership of a group which involves stigmatised behaviour, often resulting in uncooperative, unreliable or protected responses to invitations to participate in research studies.

Furthermore, my position, as a researcher who symbolised privilege (Adler & Adler, 2003), and representing an institution outside of their known associations (Kemp, 2010), added to the complexity of engaging this sample with the enquiry. However, through chain-referral sampling, a technique that has been advanced as effective in penetrating such ‘hidden populations’ (Salganik & Heckathorn, 2004), access was granted and research participants comprising young people associated with the identified sports clubs, were recruited through referrals involving my connections with club leaders.

Two further, yet notable, features of the youth participants was that first, all of these respondents were male, and, second, all except one was a member of the same sports club (Glynmore Youth Club). Whilst it was my initial intention to mirror the recruitment practices undertaken in relation to the engagement of club leaders, and recruit youth participants from all of the sports club concerned with *Sport for Change*, issues pertaining to access ‘within the field’<sup>14</sup> limited my opportunities to broaden this youth sample. Consequently, whilst all seven participating clubs were approached to negotiate interviews with youth participants, my ‘gatekeepers’ within these clubs were, in general, unable to grant access to individuals willing to collaborate with me (Markula & Silk, 2011). Again, whilst I did not embark on this enquiry with an intent to study an exclusively male population, of the clubs who were able to negotiate research encounters between myself and their young members, affiliation of these clubs reflected a male preponderance resulting in the sample that I was able to engage. Nevertheless, investigation of an exclusively male group of young people did enable me to examine how *Sport for Change* impacted on the lives of young men who resided in identified locales of deprivation where high unemployment, low educational attainment, and the prevalence of crime (DCLG, 2011) present a continual challenge to social inclusion via employability, a key component of masculinity (McDowell, 2014; Roberts, 2011).

### ***3.4 Ethical challenges in the practice of realist evaluation***

The very essence of qualitative enquiry involving largely dialogic methods is imbued with, and dependent upon, the efficacy of the relationship between researcher and the researched

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<sup>14</sup> The reasons which impacted access to the youth participants pertained to issues of geographical proximity between London and Bath; and more specifically in relation to timing (e.g. my availability to visit London, my visits generally being conducted on weekdays, when the clubs met at weekends, the time constraints of this study).

(Josselson, 2007; Ryen, 2003). This demands the maintenance of ethical conduct to ensure that the potential for risk to the research participant is limited and that data is garnered and represented within the best interests of the respondent (Josselson, 2007; Amis, 2005). Following ethical clearance for the study, granted by the Department of Education Ethics Committee at the University of Bath (see Appendix I), my research complied with, and adhered to, the ethical guidelines stipulated by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011). More specifically, each of the study participants was provided with an 'Information Sheet' (see Appendix II), which outlined the aims of the research enquiry to ensure that every participant understood the process of how they would be engaged and represented within the study (BERA, 2011). Furthermore, and adhering to BERA (2011) guidelines, this document provided detail concerning right to withdraw, matters pertaining to the collection, storage and representation of the data, alongside factors related to confidentiality and anonymity in respect to names of people, locations, or organisations, which arose during the research. In some cases, the right to anonymity was specifically and willingly waived (BERA, 2011) and recorded accordingly.

However, mere compliance with a prescribed list of ethical guidelines did not capture adequately the subtleties of the specific research context and its associated ethical and axiological concerns (McNamee, 2010; Josselson, 2007; Kent, 2000). Undoubtedly, the visible differences between the demographic and cultural characteristics of myself and those being researched presented further ethical and axiological considerations (Ryen, 2003). Primarily, these 'cross-cultural' research encounters, symbolic of a relationship where the research participants and the researcher "inhabit vastly different worlds or engage each other with sharply contrasting aims" (Ryen, 2003, p.430), required reflexive awareness on my part. For Ryen (2003), this 'insider-outsider' dilemma, presents further, yet inter-related, reflexive challenges, most notably in relation to the naturalistic assumptions regarding culture and communication; issues related to trust; and circumventing the tendency (intended or otherwise) to 'colonise' the research.

To elaborate, the first of these considerations concerned the traditions of naturalistic social science research, where the objective of such enquiry is to comprehend social reality on its own terms (Holstein & Gubrium, 2008). Indeed, as Holstein and Gubrium (2008) observe, naturalistic enquiry is "a matter of documenting and communicating true-to-life depictions of social worlds—the more thickly described the better" (p. 374). Clearly, as its moniker would

suggest, realist approaches to policy evaluation possess similar ambitions, aspiring to source and bottle a social reality that is analogous to the probable truth (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2013; Pawson, 2006; Ryen, 2003). However, such epistemological theorising assumes that data which is communicated to portray this social reality, transfers in a transparent fashion between researcher and the researched (Ryen, 2003). Yet, in cross-cultural research—in particular where the medium for data collection is verbal—contrasting and conflicting perceptions, interpretations and (re-)presentations of the data can act as an impediment to the endeavour of naturalistic research (Ryen, 2011; 2008; 2003; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). As one example, in the course of data collection I commonly encountered language which was infused with specific geographical, cultural or ethnic reference. However, invoking the sentiments of Ryen, and responding reflexively to this challenge, I was alert to mis-interpretation by clarifying my understanding of such colloquialisms through further probing. Nevertheless, the subsequent analysis will represent the data verbatim, so as not to sanitise the authenticity of the lived experience of the research participants. Engaging with the research participants in this manner enabled me, methodologically speaking, to develop and maintain the vitality of trust within the researcher/participant relationship (Ryen, 2003), and confront the second self-reflexive challenge.

As Ryen (2008; 2003) contends, the ability to generate trust with the research participant is a fundamental aspect of credible data collection in any social research undertaking. However, the vicissitudes of trusting relationships become intensified within the cross-cultural research context where distrust of the intentions of the research is often visible (Adler & Adler, 2003; Ryen, 2003). Accordingly, it was incumbent upon me to create an environment that addressed any initial reluctance on the part of the respondents to engage with me, by creating and maintaining “status equalization” (Adler & Adler, 2003, p. 169), through the identification of common or overlapping interests between myself and my respondents. In practice, when encountering young people, I was often in receipt of pivotal information about them, fed to me by the club leaders, which equipped me with background knowledge that could be incorporated into interview conversations to equalise, or at least temper, any social and cultural differences. For instance, such information typically featured reference to their sporting achievements, providing me with a channel to demonstrate my interest in them as human beings and to generate a sense of trust that would pave the way for deeper, more insightful discussion.

Such self-reflexive techniques were pivotal in enabling this marginalised group to be given voice (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013) and, consequently, address the failings of methodological colonialism (Ryen, 2011; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).<sup>15</sup> Consequently, in practice, I was able to ‘reinvent’ myself in response to the diversity of the research setting (Giroux, 1995) and demonstrate ‘mobile consciousness’ (Denzin, 1997), to operate self-reflexively and reconsider my relationship with a research setting in constant flux. In semblance, Ryen (2011) contends that the challenges of cross-cultural research can be simply addressed through “cultural competence” (p. 441) and a re-balancing of the distribution of power within the research relationship, a quality that I was self-reflexively alert to, and eager to embrace within my own data collection.

### ***3.5 Data collection***

Despite the obvious philosophical and pragmatic strengths of the realist perspective, this approach to programme evaluation presents significant methodological challenges to the researcher, both academically and practically, during the data collection phase (Pawson, 2006). These challenges are most apposite in the need to act reflexively, and select appropriately from the research palette to garner data that is both rigorous for the purposes of the evaluation, yet sufficiently rich to present a detailed depiction of programme efficacy. Again, such reflexivity becomes more acute, yet increasingly complex, given the aforementioned social or cultural differences experienced within the research setting. Building upon arguments raised in the previous section pertaining to the colonisation of research (Ryen, 2011), a growing number of scholars have suggested that classical qualitative methods lack cultural appropriateness and methodological utility when employed in culturally diverse contexts, instead calling for more *avant garde* or innovative methodological practices (Ryen, 2011; Wiles, Crow & Pain 2011; Doornbos, Van Rooij, Smit & Verdonshot, 2008; Scott, 2004; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999). Indeed, proponents of more innovative approaches have noted their worth in redressing the balance of power between the researcher and participant (Wiles *et al.*, 2011), facilitating better quality engagement from participants (Doornbos *et al.*, 2008), and extending the boundaries of existing methods (Wiles *et al.*, 2011). However, despite the clear attraction of deploying innovative methods within culturally complex research settings, opponents have raised key questions pertaining to what the innovation is claimed to achieve and how it is likely to garner more

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<sup>15</sup> The colonisation of research refers to the dominant position of traditional, or ‘Westernised’, methods within methodological approaches to understanding different cultures which craft a colonised or imperialistic interpretation of such cultures (Ryen, 2011; Tuhiwai Smith, 1999).

detailed and useful descriptions of the social world (Travers, 2009).<sup>16</sup> In short, as Wiles *et al.* (2011) confer “*different* is not necessarily *better*” (p. 602, original emphasis), suggesting that utilising innovative methods to garner evidence pertaining to programme efficacy requires adherence and alignment to the specific methodological challenges that are presented.

This tension was present within my study, where I willingly embraced the attraction to innovate methodologically, yet encountered limited enthusiasm, and consequently no engagement, with my proposed practice of ‘photo-elicitation’ (Pink, 2013; Prosser, 2013; Phoenix, 2010; Harper, 2002).<sup>17</sup> Arguably, the reticence to engage with this method was indicative of the transitory and detached relationship (Brannen, 1998) which existed between myself and my respondents. Regardless, this non-engagement presented me with limited option but to harvest data through more traditional means, whereby the semi-structured interview emerged as the primary method of investigation. The selection of semi-structured interviews enabled the respondents to offer thick and rich descriptions of their engagement with the *Sport for Change* programme whilst providing scope for elaboration (Rapley, 2001). Furthermore, employing this specific interview technique enabled the discussion to roam beyond the confines of the research questions to expose topics of importance to the participant. However, of most salience within this research context, in particular during the discussions with the youth participants, was that the semi-structured approach provided distinct, if flexible, parameters for the interview, by offering a checklist of topics to be raised (Veal & Darcy, 2014; Adler & Adler, 2003).

In total 22 interviews were conducted with a variety of project stakeholders and personnel involved within the programme’s chain of implementation which lasted between 4 and 62 minutes in duration, at a mean length of 29 minutes (see Table 3.3). Each participant was interviewed once, with the interviews informed by two distinct interview guides (see Appendix III) which differed according to the interview participant. The topics that were included within

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<sup>16</sup> For Travers (2009), methodological decisions to innovative must be undertaken on the basis of “changing how we understand the practice, as well as the epistemological foundations, of qualitative research” (p. 175) rather than as a concession to cultural, political, technological or institutional pressure, whereby the decision to innovative is purely superficial and predicated on fashionable, yet shallow efforts to increase the attractiveness of such research.

<sup>17</sup> This proposed visual practice would involve the use of ‘participant-produced’ images to capture representations from each young person to reflect specific episodes in their lives and provide a platform for further discussion with the research participant.

these separate guides were informed by the conceptual understandings outlined within Chapter 2, but were also cognisant of the specific research participants. For example, the interview guide constructed for use with programme staff was based upon themes and questions related to the structure and design of *Sport for Change*, whilst the themes that guided the discussions with the youth participants were more focussed on understanding their lived experience and articulating how the sports-based programme had impacted upon their lives in relation to the forms of capital that may contribute to social inclusion. The interviews were recorded via an iPad application,<sup>18</sup> and then transcribed verbatim in preparation for more detailed analytical treatment (Markula & Silk, 2011). The interviews were conducted in a variety of settings, all convenient to the participant, and included social space at specific sports clubs, offices at workplaces, cafes, and, in one instance, standing on a BMX track. Whilst the content of each interview altered in relation to the various project stakeholders and research respondents, this method enabled me to acquire a deeper understanding of the sufficient conditions that are evident within the programme theory of *Sport for Change* (Coalter, 2007; Pawson, 2006). In addition, not only did this method provide consistency and data from all stakeholder groups about their subjective experience of the sports-based programme (Rapley, 2001; Holloway, 1997), the interview interaction also facilitated a locating of the data within the respondents' personal biography, adding further richness and context to the conversation (Scott & Usher, 1999).

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<sup>18</sup> Recordium version 3.2.

Interview participant	Number of interviews undertaken	Mean duration (minutes)	Range (minutes)
Programme staff	1	37	n/a
Club leaders/coaches	8	50	32 - 62
Vocational training providers	3	29	25 - 32
Youth participants	10	12	4 - 17
Totals	22	29	4 - 62

Table 3.3: Interview information and duration.

### ***3.6 Analysis and representation***

For Barker (2012), the analysis and subsequent representation of data embodies the lifeblood of cultural studies enquiry. This contention is predicated on the “textual generation of meaning” (Barker, 2012, p. 8) as the central concern during this phase of the methodology. Within realist-infused investigation, the primary purpose of analysis and representation is one of refinement (Pawson, 2006), whereby the guiding programme theory is filtered and more clearly articulated through a process of “bringing empirical evidence to bear on the...initial theory map” (p. 94). This accent on refinement reinforces the over-arching philosophy of the realist approach, and concurs strongly with the pursuit of intelligent policy design (van der Knapp, 2004), by concentrating the analysis on explanation, enlightenment and pragmatism, as opposed to partisanship and summative verdict (Pawson, 2006). However, for Johnson *et al.* (2004), analysis and representation are not separated moments in the research process, thereby advocating for an integration of these procedures to obtain more intuitive understandings of programme mechanisms. Accordingly, they describe analysis and representation as a dynamic, interactive and multi-directional process where analysis informs representation and *vice versa*. As such, the



textualisation of the dialogically-produced data affords distinct opportunities for intense reflection alongside more objective, contextualised sense-making, to demonstrate “the art of cultural practice” (Johnson *et al.*, 2004, p.226). Consequently, within my own analytical practice, I employed the work of Johnson *et al.* (2004), by engaging with the data through four *dialogues* of analysis.

Briefly, the opening dialogue—*recalling*—exemplifies the integrative approach to analysis proposed by these authors. In this dialogue, analysis transpired within the field, during or immediately following data collection, utilising the selectivity of memory to establish initial impressions of the research setting or preliminary themes pertaining to the investigation (Johnson *et al.*, 2004). This was followed by the dialogue of *listening around*, where intensive engagement with the textualised aspects of the research first occurred. Resonating with more traditional articulations of data analysis (see Rivas, 2012; Creswell, 2009; Pawson, 2006), listening around involved extensive preparation of the interview texts, and the utilisation of techniques such as transcription, coding and indexing, to revise or reform the themes generated during the recalling dialogue (Johnson *et al.*, 2004). Accordingly, each interview was transcribed verbatim, paying particular attention to preserving key markers of meaning (Johnson *et al.*, 2004) such as pauses, laughter, and more importantly, instances of language which contained geographical, cultural or ethnic references. In addition, all transcripts were reviewed and the names of people and places were anonymised through the allocation of pseudonyms. The transcribed texts were then coded to enable me to understand the raw data (Bazely, 2013), before being categorised into a ‘long-list’ of potential themes which emerged from the listening around dialogue (Johnson *et al.*, 2004).

The third dialogue—*close reading*—supplied the critical bond to unite the otherwise isolated processes of analysis and representation. Here, the texts were subjected to closer scrutiny for meanings associated with the salient features of the lived experience, as well as for insights into the constraints of structure and culture on the research context (Johnson *et al.*, 2004). As a consequence of this dialogue, themes were generated that formed the basis for the presentation of Chapters 4, 5, and 6. In broad terms, these themes related to: i) providing a deeper insight into the life-world (Eberle, 2012) of the young respondents; ii) the manner in which capital was accumulated through participation in *Sport for Change*; and iii) the extent to which engagement

with the programme ‘benefited’ the youth participants. As the precursor for writing, the close reading dialogue also identified the critical cases (Johnson *et al.*, 2004), which would inform, enlighten, and, above all, present the evidence for the refinement of programme mechanisms.

The final dialogue, categorised as *representing self and others*, (Johnson *et al.*, 2004), encountered the treacherous process of “constructing versions of reality” (Flick, 2009, p.19), within a context laden with political, methodological and legitimisation issues (Barker, 2012; Flick, 2009). For Johnson *et al.* (2004) such considerations become magnified within the micro-political landscape of representing cultural or social alterity, a prominent feature of this research enquiry. However, representation, as a form of dialogic analysis, enabled a further layer of reflection on the data and the prospect of organising it with greater conceptual clarity (Johnson *et al.*, 2004). Furthermore, following Flick (2009), as the core duty of qualitative research, representation served three critical functions—first, a pragmatic function, by presenting scientific knowledge in the form of results; second, a legitimising function, by registering trustworthy, credible and rigorous evidence; and finally, a reflexive function, by traversing the ethnographic tightrope of connecting the reader with the research, whilst also remaining “faithful to the context and the individuals it is supposed to represent” (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000, p. 1052).

Within the confines of this enquiry, it was this final, reflexive function which presented the most immediate challenge to my representation of the data. More specifically, this involved a detailed and reflexive consideration of how to ‘give voice’ and to whom (Johnson *et al.*, 2004). As mentioned, my sampling concentrated its attention to recruit more widely from the members of the implementation chain most closely associated with the interface of delivery, with the intention of enabling extended dialogic text and quotation from these respondents (Johnson *et al.*, 2004). However, as Johnson *et al.* (2004) concede, any representation of research which crosses power or cultural boundaries is “bound to privilege some voices and eclipse others” (p. 240).

Uppermost within the selection of this dialogic framework for analysis was the potential it offered to integrate the analysis into all four dialogues, and to treat analysis and representation of the data as an iterative process rather than as a linear, hierarchical procedure (Creswell, 2009).

Consequently, by implementing the four dialogues of analysis, I was endowed with a guiding framework which enabled me to engage in a multi-layered and iterative self-reflexive conversation with the data, alongside a humanist commitment to “the construction of meaning within [the] space, time and relations of power” (Johnson *et al.*, 2004, p. 241) evident within the research setting.

### ***3.7 Evaluating realist-infused enquiry***

A final, yet critical, methodological consideration is the manner in which the enquiry will be evaluated and judged. As a foundation, identification of an appropriate judgement criteria involves a defined acknowledgement of what constitutes ‘good’ evaluative enquiry—a task which becomes more complex and acute for enquiry which is qualitatively engineered (Tracy, 2010; Sparkes, 2002). Debate surrounding this concern primarily contemplates the dilemma of presenting research that is cognisant of the epistemological and ontological assumptions that underpin the interpretivist paradigm, yet which meet conventional standards of rigour, and engage the reader in a literary and evocative manner (Altheide & Johnson, 2013; Denzin and Lincoln, 2013, Sparkes, 2002; Schwandt, 1997). Most endeavours to address this dilemma cohere around the identification of more appropriate criteria by which to judge qualitative enquiry (see Richardson, 2000; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), principally by a conceptual repositioning of the notion of validity (Sparkes, 2002). Nevertheless, whilst such criteria lists present an adequate and increasingly established framework to evaluate qualitative enquiry (Tracy, 2010), debate still remains regarding the legitimacy of preordained criteria lists to demonstrate the intellectual vibrancy necessary for insightful policy studies (Altheide & Johnson, 2013; Torrance, 2013; Pawson, 2013; Sparkes, 2002; Garratt & Hodgkinson, 1998). Indeed, as Tracy (2010) observes, “values for quality...are ever changing and situated within local contexts and current conversations” (p. 837), an observation which aligns appositely with realist methodology (Room, 2013; Pawson, 2013), and which therefore demands responsible, self-reflexive deliberation as to how best to address the ‘quality’ question.

Arguably, in determining the quality of realist-infused enquiry, the work must move beyond attempts to merely percolate ideas and enlighten policy-makers, towards embracing and

delivering an over-riding duty to bridge the political terrain, lobby for policy change, and influence the work of programme architects who often lack the knowledge or inclination to make adequate judgements on qualitative analyses (Pawson, 2013; 2006; Vinson & Parker, 2013; Altheide & Johnson, 2013). To this end, Tracy (2010) offers a set of eight criteria by which enquiry that attempts to “engage in dialogue with power holders” (p. 849) may be judged—criteria which I have adopted to assess the quality of this enquiry. The first of these criterion concerns investigation of a *worthy topic*—categorised by Tracy (2010) as topics which appear relevant, timely, significant, or evocative, and which contain potential for moral critique or challenging conventional thinking—themes which are highly evident, both theoretically and contextually, within my study. Second, is the necessity to display *rich rigour*, by integrating an abundance of theoretical concepts to frame research which is representative of sufficient time in the field, investigating an appropriate sample, and collecting data which will substantiate meaningful, significant conclusions (Tracy, 2010). Third, the enquiry must demonstrate *sincerity* (Tracy, 2010) by signposting a self-reflexive consideration of how my own biases and subjectivities may influence the research setting, alongside transparency and honesty in undertaking and reporting the research process. In similarity, *credibility*, the fourth of Tracy’s (2010) criteria, refers to the presentation of trustworthy findings, which embody thick description and multivocality, to explicate cultural meaning and insights which encompasses the full range of participant perspectives. These latter two criteria form the nucleus for the fifth criterion—*ethicity*—a feature that has received detailed attention elsewhere in this methodology.

The final three criteria offered by Tracy (2010) relate directly to the capacity of the research to connect with the reader and influence their interpretation of the enquiry. First, this requires the enquiry to *resonate* with the reader through “practices that promote empathy, identification and reverberation...[with] readers who have no direct experience with the topic” (Tracy, 2010, p. 844). Similarly, *significant contribution*, the penultimate criterion, encompasses the manner in which the research moves or challenges the reader intellectually to generate further investigation as a by-product; or, as is the case with my study, the research initiates action through its practical significance (Tracy, 2010) via knowledge-creation which illuminates a contemporary problem. The final criterion—*meaningful coherence*—relates to how closely the research delivered its initial promise. For Tracy (2010), meaningful coherence implies the utilisation of appropriate methods

and practices, an attentive integration of theoretical positions, and achievement of the research's stated purpose, all of which are pertinent to the ambitions of this enquiry.

### ***3.8 Summary***

In response to appeals to examine and evaluate sports-based programmes with more nuanced methodological approaches (Coalter, 2007) and present evidence pertaining to how such programmes purport to work which extend beyond the dominance of quantitative methods (Room, 2013; Pawson, 2013), this chapter has presented an overview of the realist methodological framework (Pawson, 2006) which guided and underpinned the design of this research study. Moreover, this chapter has introduced and critically justified the methods and practices that were employed to acquire, analyse, and represent the data, whilst offering self-reflexive commentary into the challenges and tensions that I encountered 'in the field' during the course of data collection.

The resulting data will shape the discussion for the chapters that follow, where insights will be presented into how participation in *Sport for Change* impacted on the recipients of the programme (Chapter 6), and how this participation enabled capital to be accumulated which may contribute to enhanced prospects for employability (Chapter 5). However, more immediately, in order to provide a foundation for such interpretations, the study will now orient towards articulating the 'life-world' of the young people engaged by *Sport for Change* (Eberle, 2012) to offer further critical understandings of the context that was investigated and detail on the lived experience of young people who reside on the urban residential estate.

## CHAPTER 4: ARTICULATING THE ‘LIFE-WORLD’ OF THE COMPLICATED NEET

As a departure point to construct nuanced inferences about the efficacy of *Sport for Change*, and refine its associated programme logic (Pawson, 2013), this chapter creates a platform for further analysis by providing insight into the lived experiences of the young people who reside and operate at the interface of programme delivery (Woodward, 2014; Eberle, 2012; Schultz & Luckmann, 1973). Consequently, the chapter endeavours to articulate the ‘life-world’ (Eberle, 2012; Garza, 2007; Chatman, 1996) of my respondents, to glean understandings of routine encounters, expected norms and everyday practices, both domestic and private, to interpret the interactions between the individual and the communities in which they reside (Woodward, 2014; Chatman, 1996). For Schultz (1967, cited in Eberle, 2012), articulating the life-world enables insight into the fundamental meaning structures of its reality, the constitution of an individual’s experiences, and the processes associated with their understanding of the ‘other’, rendering it as an essential component of this enquiry.

Within populations defined as NEET or RONI, crafting a more comprehensive appreciation of these meaning structures and this specific ‘life-world’ becomes more acute, in particular to locate precise understandings about the configurations between the programme mechanisms and its context (Garza, 2007; Chatman, 1996). In turn, these understandings will (re)present more robust foundational evidence for programme architects to contemplate within subsequent iterations of the programme (Pawson, 2013). Accordingly, this chapter, first, reveals how the ‘life-world’ of the urban, residential estate acts to restrict social inclusion, by imposing symbolic boundaries (Small, Harding & Lamont, 2010) which suppress or promote certain forms of life-aspiration; and second, highlights the critical role performed by community sports clubs in facilitating acceptance into a recognised social institution and subsequently, establishing a conduit to social inclusion (Rose *et al.*, 2012).

### ***4.1 ‘Post-code wars’—life on the urban residential estate***

As highlighted in Chapter 2, recent conceptual understandings of social exclusion have developed beyond simplistic constructions which accentuate financial poverty, towards articulations which embrace and express it as a multi-dimensional concept comprising of social, political and cultural components (Burchardt *et al.*, 2002). More specifically, social exclusion

has been conveyed in terms of detachment from mainstream society (Dacombe, 2013; Room, 1995), as the absence of active participation in community activities (Spaaij *et al.*, 2013; Townsend, 1979), or in relation to limited access to routine services which encompass aspects of shared cultural life (Winlow & Hall, 2013). Such discourse infers that social exclusion possesses a restrictive function, whereby the socially excluded are contained within narrowly-formed cultural ‘pockets’ (Bannister, Kintrea & Pickering, 2013), which limit active participation in community activity and deny access to contemporary articulations of citizenship which espouse and centralise civic engagement (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

In a physical sense, the findings from this research highlight how such restriction is reinforced and perpetuated by the cultural norms of life in the urban, residential estate. More precisely, whilst visible or tangible barriers between estates were absent, the data provide insight into the possessive nature of the ‘postcode’, and how the territorial landscape of the estate plays an important role in restricting daily movement, reinforcing detachment from civic engagement and engendering social exclusion. By way of example, Zaeem, the leader of the Victoria Sports-Hub, explained that aside from the notable exception of visits to ‘institutionalised’ settings (e.g. educational establishments or sites of religious worship), young people become “*quarantined inside their own estate*”, to underline the enclosed nature of the lived experience. For some authors (e.g. Fraser, 2013; Willis, 2003), such restriction is a consequence of neoliberal forces, such as deindustrialisation, which have re-articulated the lived experience within these physical spaces (Winlow & Hall, 2013; Paton *et al.*, 2012; McGuirk & Dowling, 2009; Silk & Andrews, 2008). As such, attachment to the postcode assumes a pivotal role in the construction of social identity and further reinforces the sense of socio-economic marginality that residents within these locales experience (Fraser, 2013; Bannister *et al.*, 2013; Pitts, 2012).

Data also revealed the challenges created by the restrictive nature of the estate postcode, highlighting how a lack of resources and community services available within the residential estate promoted negative labelling of certain postcodes, to further reinforce divisions between neighbourhoods, and “inform the inhabitants’ construction of their own identities” (Winlow & Hall, 2013, p. 21). Echoing the quarantine narrative, Musaid, the Assistant Coach at Victoria Sports-Hub, revealed how for some young people, their existence consisted of “*just sitting around, hanging around in abandoned buildings*”, while Jim, the Director of a local social enterprise, alluded

to the “*ghettoization*” that results from the constraint of the postcode, whereby the estate “*just becomes this place [of disturbance]*”. Such perceptions intimate how the spatial immobility of estate life promotes a narrative of boredom, a sense of powerlessness, and a restriction on legitimate self-expression, to generate a self-imposed ostracism (Fraser, 2013; Bannister *et al.*, 2013). As Michael and Malcolm, the leaders at the Glynmore Club, further enlightened:

Michael: The estate was rife with problems...nowhere to go. [Young people] were going crazy out there. They were causing a lot of problems in the neighbourhood. Mopeds going 'til three or four o'clock in the morning, up and down all night. Kids are not sleeping when they should be sleeping, they're out on the estate...there's footballs being kicked against garages 'til God knows what time at night...[people] were pulling their hair out round here. It was out of control.

Malcolm: Yeah, three estate, nothing for young people to do, you can't play football, you can't play this, what is young people gonna do?

Such insight corresponds cogently with Winlow and Hall's (2013) assertion of the *post-social* world, characterised by atomised and fragmented urban neighbourhoods, where individuals become “cut adrift from...relations, customs, codes and cultural norms” (p. 2). Moreover, these insights into the quarantined, atomised, and detached nature of estate life resonate with Levitas' discourse of the moral underclass<sup>19</sup>; one conceptualisation of social exclusion. More starkly, and as an extension of the entrapped world inhabited by these young people, the data revealed how the manifestation of the moral underclass discourse, which results from the atomised urban neighbourhood, bestows fertile ground for the incubation of ‘gang culture’. Indeed, given Densley's (2012) assertion that the evolutionary development of gangs is conceived within neighbourhood-based peer groups, and that gang activity often resembles exaggerated versions of adolescent behaviour that is typical within these locales (Densley, 2014), the translation of restricted self-expression into gang-related activity was often a short and instinctive step. As Luca, a BMX coach explained:

...people who join gangs...they say one very important thing; it's a lack of belonging...they don't have anything. They are bored, they just want to do something and joining a gang must be quite exciting...you know, you go around doing bad things, whatever, but for [a young person], you know that's fun, it's exciting isn't it.

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<sup>19</sup> This discourse views the socially excluded as burdensome and morally undesirable (Levitas, 2005; Jordan, 1996; Winlow & Hall, 2013).



Luca's insight illustrates how the lack of opportunities afforded to young people in these settings may propagate an identity constructed upon the structural exclusion that they experience (Bannister *et al.*, 2013; Paton *et al.*, 2012; Silk & Andrews, 2008). Consequently, and invoking Small *et al.* (2010), the life-world of young people within these residential estates was influenced by three elements of the socio-spatial culture which dominated this terrain. First, Small *et al.* (2010) outline how sociological inheritance, or the process of family members providing a frame of reference to legitimise gang participation (Bannister *et al.*, 2013), acts as an initial cultural influence. To reinforce this inter-generational frame (Small *et al.*, 2010), Terrence, a young man who attends the Glynmore Club, remarked:

Life without football would probably be like a violent one alternatively, 'coz...you've got gang violence. I have a bad attitude innit...and my uncle and cousin were talking about me going in the gang, but football, 'coz I've trained and trained, I've stopped hanging around...and that's helped me a lot 'coz I would probably have been in a gang by now.

Second, and as intimated above, the estate culture erects symbolic boundaries (Small *et al.*, 2010) which establish and crystalize collective identities which are influenced by an individual's postcode. Silk and Andrews (2011a) have termed this identity "the threatening other" (p. 406), given the propensity of this group to "threaten the normative universality of the urban core" (*ibid.*). This was most vividly elicited by Michael and Malcolm, who outlined the threats imposed within the estates which surround the Glynmore Club.

Michael: There are three estates surrounding this initial estate. The situation that we've had [is] with young [people] attacking other young [people]...it's called 'postcode wars'. The kids are actually fighting with each other, at a certain age.

Malcolm: They used to call this area the 'Murder Mile'. There used to be a murder within a mile of this region every weekend.

Michael: Every other day. The estates are separated [by a] roundabout. That roundabout and that stretch from the roundabout...this is where things would happen. It could be broad daylight, it could be night time, it doesn't matter, if it's gonna happen, it's gonna happen on that road.

Finally, and mirroring Willis (2003), Small *et al.* (2010) suggest that estate culture bestows upon young people a repertoire of practices and beliefs which accentuate how spatial immobility negatively construes perceptions in relation to an ability to achieve individual aspirations. Data from the current enquiry further advances this notion. For example, Zaeem pointed to the limited employment opportunities that were present within his borough, stressing that to take advantage of any such opportunities required individuals “*to go out far for them*”. As a consequence, Zaeem explained that to explore these limited employment opportunities often incurred transport costs and additional personal expense, which favoured “*whoever can afford it*”. Zaeem also remarked that “*kids nowadays, they’re very hungry for money...they want to make money quickly*”, and that gang-induced crime presented a convenient and accessible means to this specific end.

Insights gleaned from the young respondents illustrated how engagement with sport offered respite from this socio-spatial culture (Small *et al.*, 2010) and presented an alternative frame of reference regarding life opportunities. Building upon theoretical articulations of social control (see Hylton & Totten, 2013), most of the young people expressed similar sentiments to those offered by Ben, who observed of his football participation at the Glynmore Youth Club:

Personally, it’s helped me a lot, ’coz to be honest, if it wasn’t for this club who knows what I could be right now. Honestly, they’ve given me some real opportunities that I’ve taken, definitely taken. It’s made me see the world in a different perspective...

#### ***4.2 Indicators of deprivation and the threat of ‘NEET-ness’***

Clearly, for young people who reside within these neighbourhoods, the social and cultural exposure to elements of the moral underclass discourse concurs with competing literature which attempts to classify the ‘risk factors’ associated with becoming a ‘complicated NEET’ (Nudzor, 2010; Yates & Payne, 2006). Pertinent literature identifies a broad gamut of themes or risk factors which prevail within the lived experience of the complicated NEET (Seddon *et al.*, 2013; Nudzor, 2010; Yates & Payne, 2006). Many of these themes correspond to commonly applied indicators of deprivation (CLG, 2011); for example, financial exclusion, the prevalence of crime, educational disaffection, and substance abuse. The data reaffirmed how young people who have

been recipients of *Sport for Change* are continually confronted by the threat of these deprivation indicators. As AJ noted of the locale where he coaches at a BMX club:

...it is a classically deprived area...over there you've got Church Mews, which has been in the news numerous times...that's got a curfew and all sorts, you know, Police CCTV smart car goes round every night.

However, it was Faizel, a member of Fliers BMX, who provided the most candid insight into the connection between the indicators of deprivation and the threat of NEET-ness.

Faizel: Where I live, there's a lot of crime and stuff like that...around me, and my school, everywhere, there's a lot of crime, so you're better off having fun, taking part in sport.

HM: Might you have got into crime?

Faizel: That's probably one factor that was highly likely – to get involved... 'coz everyone that I was around, there was a lot of bad people. Even though I knew it, it's so easy to get dragged in, just get caught into that stuff. It might start off something simple as 'can you carry this, can you carry that'... 'can you go and deliver this'... and after that, that's it, that's your life.

HM: What do you mean, deliver what?

Faizel: Stuff like drugs, you could hold a knife, you could be delivering drugs on a bike... that's one of the reasons why my Dad didn't want to buy me a bike. I asked him for a bike recently and he was like "you should just be aware that there's people around that are stealing bikes, they're really dangerous"... you could be sucked into something illegal on the bike, especially in the area that I live in.

However, of the various risk factors attributed to conceptualisations of the complicated NEET, the data highlighted two themes as particularly prominent; financial exclusion, and weak familial and support networks. First, and as outlined above, in relation to financial exclusion, several respondents indicated how economic problems, such as unemployment and financial insecurity were commonplace in their locales, to exemplify how this form of exclusion could contribute to NEET status. Jay's narrative provided an explicit indication of how financial exclusion presented a genuine threat to social inclusion. He stated:

I've never really known, like, real problems with money [unlike] some of my mates. Like my friend George...he will like...if somebody comes to my house I'll be able to offer them food, but George, like, if I go to his house, it's his food for the week, he needs to see himself alright, you get what I'm saying.

Financial exclusion also appeared to contribute to the second major risk factor identified by the data; namely weak familial and support networks. Invoking literature which contends that a clear relationship exists between family background and engagement with education (Nudzor, 2010; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005), the evidence from this study raises consistent findings in relation to familial support. In most cases, the limited parental support that was available to young people was a direct consequence of the financial, social or educational factors which were perpetuated by the deprivation experienced in these locales. As noted, in some cases the presence of an influential gang member within the family unit was a common feature, leading AJ, a coach at Footjam BMX to observe that *“90% of the time, unless you actually know the parents, you know they're [the young people] not gonna get any support”*.

In other cases, the necessity for parents to work long hours in order to earn sufficient income impacted on their ability to fully support their children, initially in maintaining their participation in sport, but more generally in encouraging the pursuit of their life aspirations. For example, when commenting on the level of parental support in transporting young people to matches, Bobby, the manager of Napier Park Cricket Club, revealed:

[For] many of them, the parents work 12 hour days, a lot of them haven't got cars at all. The ones that have cars sometimes they're cabbies, you know, and asking them to suddenly do a free run to Forest Cross, they're thinking 'that's a 35 quid fare'...so it becomes a financial thing. I'm very disappointed with about 80 per cent of the parents – the kids...the enthusiasm, the respect and everything, I would say I'm happy with 90 per cent of the kids, but the parents are a different matter. The parental involvement is very poor...but that's the reality of [this borough].

Clearly, a number of risk factors associated with NEET status are in evidence within the locales investigated by this research. However, the manner in which these risk factors interact with the lived experience of the young people within these urban residential estates does vary.

Nevertheless, the data revealed that these risk factors do not present themselves in isolation. Instead, these risk factors create a complex web of challenges which young people in these locales need to negotiate and overcome if they are to avoid NEET status.

### ***4.3 Hope, dreams, aspirations and barriers***

One specific challenge that is created by the omnipresent threat of NEET indicators relates to the impact of these factors on life aspiration (Yates *et al.*, 2011). Indeed, one of the prevailing invectives levelled at young people who are categorised as NEET concerns the perceived lack of occupational aspiration which is evident within these populations (Yates *et al.*, 2011). Nevertheless, as Finlay *et al.* (2010) observe, the assertion that those classified as NEET display low degrees of aspiration is discursively inferred, based upon myth and political rhetoric, rather than substantive fact. Evidence from the current study reaffirms and further demythologises the connection between low aspiration and NEET-ness, with all of the young participants indicating the existence of occupational ambitions.

In accordance with the literature on aspiration, the range of ambitions explicated by the respondents varied significantly, but could be classified within two distinct categories; ‘normal’ aspiration; or ‘misaligned’ aspiration (Yates *et al.*, 2011; Finlay *et al.*, 2010). Accordingly, some participants alluded to aspiring to comparatively modest future selves related to job stability and raising a family, which, according to Finlay *et al.* (2010) constitutes ‘normal’ aspirations, whereby alignment between their anticipated career trajectory and existing educational expectation was evident. By way of illustration, Jay divulged an aspiration to become a secondary school teacher, while Jamie conveyed an aspiration to “*go college and study plumbing*” if his preferred aspiration of becoming a professional boxer was unsuccessful. Similarly, Dwayne expressed an intention to gain employment in the hotel industry and offered an envisioned self which entailed “*trying to see myself in that nice living...that good living [and]...be that type of guy that’s good at multiple stuff*”.

In some cases, the ambitions expressed by the respondents were redolent with definitions of the ‘misaligned’ aspiration (Yates *et al.*, 2011), where career aspiration either exceeded educational expectation, or the ambition appeared overly optimistic, being inspired and

influenced by media representations of an associated role model (Finlay *et al.*, 2010). To exemplify, Mehtin, Thaqib and Majeed expressed ambitions to become professional boxers, while Terrence's ambitions centred on earning a contract at a professional football club. Whilst these ambitions in themselves may indeed be plausible, in all cases, the ambitions related to positions at the apex of these professional hierarchies (e.g. "*Champion of the World*" [Mehtin]; "*being the best player in the world*" [Terrence]), indicative of a rather naïve or misaligned approach to articulating future ambitions.

However, a more insightful finding from the data related to the young persons' perceptions of the potential barriers which may impede the realisation of these aspirations. In identifying the thematics of these potential impediments, the data revealed correspondence with various forms of capital—most notably human, social and psychological—and how insufficiencies in these three forms of capital may present an obstacle to the attainment of their aspirations. That said, in terms of the accumulation of human capital, there was limited evidence of this concept contributing as a potential impediment. Indeed, there was a united belief among the young respondents that engagement with some form of education or training would enable them to access the next stage of their career trajectory. Consequently, in all except one case, the young respondents were currently engaged in formal education or training of some description, and (as applicable) expressed an intent to continue this participation beyond the statutory requirement. Further illustration of the belief in human capital accrual was espoused by Dwayne, the only respondent who (at time of interview) aligned with the NEET definition. For him, access to his preferred employment in the hotel industry relied solely on the accumulation of relevant human capital. Consequently, when asked about his strategy to gain employment, he responded: "*just basically find that course, like, find that course, that right course for it and just go to every activities of it, you know what I'm saying...and just go for it*".

Potentially, the fervent belief in human capital accumulation that was noticeable within the young participants may be indicative of the guiding rhetoric and architecture of recent government policy connected to young people, which has centralised a contractual relationship, whereby access to welfare is conditional upon participation in educational or training programmes (Spandler, 2007; Willis, 2003). Moreover, these same policies have placed human capital in the vanguard, based upon an assumption that recognises human capital as the most

simply acquired form of capital, and a form over which the individual has most control (e.g. *Positive for Youth*, HM Government, 2011). Consequently, such thinking has led to a flooded market-place of private and state-funded initiatives which target NEET populations to engage with education and training (Spaaij *et al.*, 2013; Brown *et al.*, 2011) to further centralise the location of human capital accumulation within recent policy discourse.

However, what also emerged from the data, were narratives which highlighted how post-industrial society has repositioned the importance of qualification and certification within the aspirational consciousness of young people on the margins of society. More precisely, and in contrast to Willis' (2003) assertion that industrial society promotes an "anti-mental attitude" (p.395),<sup>20</sup> the post-industrial society, with its consumerist emphasis (Winlow & Hall, 2013; Paton *et al.*, 2012; Silk & Andrews, 2011a) has encouraged young people to re-imagine aspiration and social mobility through the value of credentialism. Whilst Willis (2003), and others (most notably Rose (2000a) and Winlow and Hall (2013)), would contend that the primacy afforded to human capital is indicative of a discourse which views low aspiration and the failure to gain employment as an individualised or internalised (rather than a structural) problem, the young people within this study expressed a hope that aspiration can be realised by human capital enhancement.

Nevertheless, the data also revealed that certain perceived barriers which could impede the accomplishment of life aspirations cohered with conceptual aspects of positive psychological and social capital. More specifically, the findings exposed how consequences of the life-world, most notably the structuring of society, impacted perceived deficiencies in hope, self-efficacy and resilience, whilst contributing to a lack of social ties to facilitate or accelerate progression towards career ambitions. For example, deficiencies in the components of positive psychological capital were commonly cited as impediments to the attainment of life aspirations. With regard to resilience (Luthans *et al.*, 2007), Michael outlined how the initial lack of employment opportunities in the locale coupled with the disenchantment experienced following unsuccessful job applications had a draining effect on the reserves of resilience among the young people at the Glynmore Club. He stated:

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<sup>20</sup> An 'anti-mental attitude' refers to an indifferent value attached to the attainment of academic or vocational qualifications (Willis, 2003).

There's quite a few of them that are looking for work, but there's no work out there – it's very hard, you know what I mean – and then when you see some of them coming in, it's disappointing when they don't get the job.

Arguably, such setbacks can contribute to a diminished sense of self-efficacy, whereby a lack of success in the employment market engenders a sense of silent or covert pathologizing of the lived experience (Silk & Andrews, 2011a; Shields, 2004). According to Shields (2004), such pathologizing positions the lived experience of those on the margins of society as abnormal or unacceptable, where the abilities possessed by these pathologized individuals become construed as subnormal. This silent pathologizing was best illustrated by Zaeem who summarised his upbringing on a residential estate as “*unlucky*”. Moreover, the apparent link between silent pathologizing and self-efficacy was clearly evident in Dwayne's narrative, who mentioned that since he left school two years ago his “*skills have really, like, gone down*” which has contributed to a further reduction in positive psychological capital in relation to an absence of hope.

Further evidence of how a decline in hope, as an element of positive psychological capital, both reinforces social pathologizing and acts as a barrier to aspiration was presented by AJ, a BMX coach who mentioned:

Not many kids will actually go ‘why can't I get a job’; they go ‘I can't get a job’...they're kind of street-smart but they're street-smart with a bunch of other people who are only street-smart ...so a lot of these kids apart from the odd one who hot-foots it out of here...if they want [to get on in life] they've gotta do it themselves...

In addition, AJ's commentary serves to underline the discourse of contemporary mutations of governance (Silk & Andrews, 2008), whereby the onus rests upon the individual to become the architect of their own destiny through the double movement of autonomization and responsabilization (Rose, 2000a). Further evidence of this double movement was revealed via a recurring theme that infused the data, which intimated that an internalised locus of control existed in relation to positive psychological capital, with respondents inferring that enhancing this form of capital was within their grasp (autonomy), but also their responsibility. To illustrate



Noel, a footballer at the Glynmore Club observed: *“I’ve been guided by two or three of them [at the club], but I’ve been doing most of that on my own, I know what I want”*.

However, such control was less apparent in relation to social capital, where the absence or limited presence of social ties to accelerate or capitalise on opportunities within education, employment or training was evident in the narratives of several young people. For example, in addition to his diminishing positive psychological capital, Dwayne also attributed his current period of NEET-ness to a limited network of people who might provide a metaphorical bridge to assist him in identifying educational or employment opportunities. When contemplating on his need to receive guidance in accessing opportunities in the hotel industry, Dwayne remarked:

Yeah, definitely, definitely, definitely...just, like, someone there supporting me, like, giving me options, so I’ve got that support, you know what I’m saying. Telling me about things, about how I could get there, how I could make myself get there.

Jay also alluded to a comparative paucity of social capital as a potential barrier to his aspirations, citing *“social imbalances”* as a primary reason. When asked if there were any mitigating reasons that could impede the attainment of his ambitions he replied:

Jay: Um...no [pause 2 seconds]...no [pause 3 seconds]...there’s stuff making it harder, but nothing stopping me.

HM: Like what?

Jay: Society really...the world doesn’t intentionally make it easier for them people [from privileged backgrounds], but while people talk about equality of this and that, social imbalances stop people achieving what they could achieve. [It’s] not really a barrier just something that’s always in the background...there’ll always be somebody who can achieve a bit higher than me just because they went to a posh school’.

Building upon previous scholarship (e.g. Paton *et al.*, 2012; Silk & Andrews, 2011a; Willis, 2003), the life-world of the young people engaged by *Sport for Change*, typified by the restrictive nature of residential estate, makes a significant contribution to the potential impediments experienced

by these young people in the actualisation of their life aspirations. This was captured most aptly by Zaeem who, when reflecting on his own (relatively successful) transition from education to employment at a youth sport foundation, signalled how elements of his own upbringing had combined to weaken the levels of positive psychological and social capital among those around him:

*I had so much energy inside [when I was younger] but I didn't know where to release it, so that forced me to get into trouble outside of school. All of us innit...imagine us like 14, 15, 16 and there's no sports club in the estate, there's no youth clubs, there's no pitches...it was literally like there was no one there to guide you...no hope.*

#### **4.4 Acceptance—building a bridge to social inclusion**

The life-world of the young people within this enquiry depicts an atomised and often ostracised population who lack the social connections which may enable social mobility. However, building upon themes identified by Rose *et al.* (2012), a key finding from the data revealed the extent to which participation and membership of a sports club enabled a social connection to be created, which offered scope to develop a positive relationship between the young person and a 'recognised' social institution (Whittaker, 2010; Shields, 2004). In short, such connections germinated a sense of *acceptance* within the young person; "the primary indicator of feeling [socially] included" (Rose *et al.*, 2012, p. 261).

Furthermore, following the work of Whittaker (2010), it was apparent that those at risk of NEET status valued more informal means of recognition by individuals who were perceived to possess power (e.g. sports club leaders), as the mechanism to foster acceptance. As Whittaker (2010) observes, young people who display certain risk indicators of NEET-ness, such as academic disengagement or educational under-achievement, often receive limited recognition through formal structures and therefore rely on "informal means of recognition in the form of verbal praise or simply knowing that someone trusts and believes in you" (p. 78) to garner a sense of belonging.

Advancing the findings of Rose *et al.* (2012), evidence from the respondents alluded to how club leaders and coaches enacted a series of behaviours—for example, making them feel valued;

being mutually respectful and helpful; spending time to listen to them—to create a sense of acceptance. As illustration, Thaqib attributed his opinion that Glynmore was “*the best*” of several boxing clubs that he had attended to “*the coaches and everyone around here*”. Others (e.g. Majeed and Mehtin) spoke of their coaches as “*family*”, while Jay indicated that the coaches at Glynmore were “*inspirational*” and “*actually help the kids round here in a way that people don’t really realise*”.

Data from the club leaders and coaches corroborated the narratives of the young respondents in relation to gaining recognition and acceptance, with Bobby (Napier Park Cricket Club) indicating that even “*undisciplined [young people]...end up toeing the line because they want to be involved so much*”. Other club leaders highlighted more tangible and visible indicators of how informal recognition and acceptance was valued by the young people at-risk of NEET-ness. As illustration, Luca, a BMX coach spoke of a young rider who “*wanted to break his arm [to demonstrate it as] a badge of honour*” and confirm his status and identity as an accepted member of the BMX club. In addition, Luca explained how clothing which displayed the club logo contributed to a sense of recognition by an accepted social institution (Eagles BMX), and offered a further indicator of acceptance.

...now after a year and a half I can see they really feel that they belong [emphasis added] to the club, they are part of the club, so we gave them jerseys and stuff like that...you can see they are proud of it...

In semblance, Michael, the Club Leader at the Glynmore Youth Club, outlined how branded club clothing helped to construct acceptance and a sense of self which traversed and extended beyond the confines of an identity founded upon, and associated with, the ‘postcode’. As Michael explained:

When they all started receiving the [Glynmore] tracksuits, you know, things changed...they bonded with each other. If we continue with them, this postcode thing will dissipate. The fact of purchasing the tracksuits, the emblems and everything else, it didn’t just give them an identity it rose the stature of the club, everybody wanted one.

Interview data also highlighted how the necessity to provide informal recognition and facilitate acceptance as a metaphorical bridge to incubate social inclusion was a central concern for all of the coaches and club leaders, and adopted a position of primacy within the philosophy and actions of these respondents. As one example, Alan outlined how creating a deeper, life-long connection with Central Judo, underpinned the guiding philosophy of the club's values. Alan remarked:

We've been trying to get all the age groups from 14 to 18 to realise they have a sense of identity with the club. I often say to them, 'when you start work, even if you come down one night a week...it will always be your club, it will also be your place', you know, you'll be able to talk about it with others, you know, belonging there, you know, this is your community club. When you talk to people they feel an allegiance to that club and its great...a community thing – this is *our* club [emphasis added].

Likewise, when reflecting upon the young people that his social enterprise had engaged in vocational courses and apprenticeships, Jim, the Director of this social enterprise acknowledged:

You know we've got people who've been in prison, we've got people who've got criminal pasts, but from the get-go it's like, 'no matter who you are...the arms are open and it's a welcoming environment', regardless of who you've been. And I think that's an important part, because a lot of the young people haven't had that...they might not have fitted in or succeeded or excelled as much as they could have and it comes down to how [we] are with them.

The aim of engaging young people to generate a sense of belonging was highly evident as a central facet of Zaeem's philosophy, who mentioned on numerous occasions his enthusiasm to "*break down the barriers*" between himself and the young people at the 'multi-sports hub' he operates on a residential housing estate, and engender acceptance as a key component of a positive transition into adulthood (Whittaker, 2010).

My main aim...would be for them not to go down the path that we wouldn't want them to, so if they can turn around and say "Zaeem, thank you, 'coz of you, you made me understand", that's all we want for them. I could have been doing drug dealing right now, 'coz we had that route so many times in life...but we want them to see that you can't make money like that – simple as – regardless of how desperate you are you need to step up as a man...and we use that,

and as soon as they try and use like gang-style, thuggish language we just make them realise you're a little boy, 'coz if you want to be a man you gotta act like a man.

The sentiments of all of the coaches and club leaders associated with the programme were best explicated by Michael who stated:

...we want to improve their [the young people's] self-esteem, their belief in their self, to make them feel that they're self-worthy as well, because a lot of the kids that hang around don't really think that, you know, there's nothing to look forward to in life...we want to change that perception, we want them to understand 'you are important, you're the next generation' basically...

Further evidence of the centrality of recognition and acceptance within the philosophies of the club leaders and coaches was presented through narratives relating to their practices and actions. In particular, the data revealed how trust was created between young person and adult through, first, the language and mannerisms of the coaches and, second, via the practice of befriending (Pawson, 2006). With regard to the interactive, embodied and dynamic nature of language and mannerism in providing a signifying system (Barker, 2012) to offer recognition, acceptance, and ultimately, trust, Zaeem pointed to the need to provide explicit, visible indicators that demonstrated understanding of the lived experience of the young people they were attempting to engage. More pertinently, this entailed dispelling the perception that he was “*another authority figure*” who valued formal structures of recognition (Whittaker, 2010; Strathdee, 2013). To illustrate, Luca explained how correspondences between his language and mannerisms with those of the young people he coached established a conduit towards informal recognition and mutual acceptance. Luca expanded:

I just try to be like them a little bit, you know, when they're riding, like, 'just do it, man, it's not safe, so what, but just do it'...you kind of cross the barriers a little bit. I always tell them 'look, I'm not a PE teacher, I'm a BMX coach, you call me by my name, I'm not sir, call me Luca', and go from there.

Similarly, Zaeem exemplified how acceptance, and a burgeoning sense of social inclusion, was generated through language and mannerisms.

The language, for example...‘what’s happening, you alright, howya doing’, give them a [fist] touch or something like that you’re straight away, automatically it changes the atmosphere...that’s when they start trusting...you’re ‘blessed’ – which means you’re safe, you’re nice, you belong, we can relate to you – and once you get that trust you can speak to them however you want, they’ll clearly understand you.

This necessity to present a depiction of oneself that cohered with the young person’s standpoint was also apparent in the manner in which the coaches and club leaders attempted to befriend young people as a means to engage and commence a process of becoming a mentor to the young person. Invoking Pawson (2006), befriending presents the initial stage of youth mentoring processes which target NEET individuals and involves the creation of bonds of trust through shared experiences which enable the mentee to “recognise the legitimacy of other people and other perspectives” (p.124).

For Malcolm, identifying elements of cultural overlap (Ryen, 2011) was pivotal to his endeavours to both befriend and initiate a mentor relationship. Having achieved notable success as a professional boxer, and more recently receiving recognition for his services to youth, Malcolm was able to articulate how his life-world mirrored that of his mentees, and that this did not present an impediment to his achievements. He revealed:

What I want to show people is that...you’ve been on the TV, [but] I haven’t changed...that’s why they can speak to me. What I’m saying to young people is ‘if I can do it, you guys could do it. I didn’t born in no special place, no special house, it was just I liked boxing. I was a young man who went to school, lived on the estate, if I achieved why can’t you guys achieve’...

Similarly, Luca’s narrative was replete with insights into how his practices encompass elements of befriending, utilising the BMX bicycle as a device for engagement and as a foundation for discussing collective, shared experience.

At [Fliers] they're all Muslims...they ask me if I was Muslim and I am like 'no I'm not' but again, what connects us is the BMX. Even if you come from a different background [it's like] 'I love BMX, you like BMX, then we've got something in common'. If you get the BMX and go to the track you can say hello to everyone...in two minutes you've talked to everyone, you know it's all good.

More importantly, the compulsion to befriend young people at risk of NEET-ness appeared to be more trenchant in situations where the young person disclosed to the coach, or presented through their overt behaviour, characteristics of the risk factors associated with NEET status. To exemplify, Luca divulged an account of a young male at a BMX club who had been involved in petty-theft:

One, I found out he steals bikes...The other day I was talking to him and I was like: 'Look, I heard about this and that, it's no problem at all, but in two years' time you're an adult and if you carry on it gets more serious'. Then, [after that] he started following me that day, you know, coming up after me...

Correspondingly, Zaeem revealed how, as part of his practices, he operates proactively to identify young people deemed 'at-risk' and offers singular attention in the process of befriending.

I try and find the kids with the troubles, and when I find that they've got troubles...I don't obviously go and ask them...I try and break down the barrier until they trust us...and then like...when they see that we relate that's when their actual personality stands out. That's the reasons we try and work with the kids as close as possible 'coz we don't treat them like they're little kids, we try and make them feel like they're part of us. Forget the age gap, we just try to make them feel like they can relate to us in any way. That's the way we try and do it...befriend them, yeah.

While several of the club leaders reflected on the patience required to confront the challenges of breaking down relational barriers and the gradual nature of constructing bonds of recognition and trust, it was evident that all stakeholders of the programme identified acceptance as central

to their work. For programme leader Amber, acceptance acted as a means to aid aspiration, highlighting Zaeem's contribution to the programme as an exemplar:

They [the young people] know him, they knew him when he was younger, and they see him driving around in a nice car, wearing nice clothes because he's worked hard and gone down a different path. So something as simple as that – that they can aspire to somebody that they know has come from the same background as them...so they know that it's not just really rich people or people from the other side of London that end up in those jobs...something like that is quite powerful.

Other respondents summarised the importance of acceptance as the embarkation point to further utilise sport as a passport to navigate through an alternative portal which may offer a more hopeful and desirable future self. For instance, Mehtin noted how acceptance by the coaches at his boxing club "*changed everything*". He continued:

It's like you having the right passes, if you get one, or if you don't have one of them passes you're not gonna be able to go through the door 'coz they're not gonna let you in.

Clearly, and broadening the observations of Rose *et al.* (2012), obtaining a sense of acceptance, either formally or informally, is critical to initiating the process of social inclusion for young people at-risk of NEET status. More critically, acceptance presents a sufficient condition of programmes which utilise sport as a mechanism to engage this category of young people and transform their life trajectory away from the enclosed, restrictive and quarantined existence of the urban, residential estate.

#### ***4.5 Summary***

This chapter has provided insight into the life-world of young people, who despite their residence within localities labelled as deprived, were ambitious, aspirational and hopeful of a positive future life. However, deeper analysis of these life-worlds revealed a quarantined existence within the residential estate, a strong attachment to the postcode, and the pervasive threat of indicators associated with becoming NEET. Moreover, this chapter discovered young people who were lacking in social connections with groups, organisations and networks beyond



their immediate postcode, which exacerbated the threat of NEET-ness and presented clear opportunities for engagement in anti-social behaviour and crime. Nevertheless, what the chapter has exposed is that membership of a sports club presented a critical connection with a recognisable and socially legitimate organisation (Whitaker, 2000) through which accepting relationships, the theoretical starting point for social inclusion (Rose *et al.*, 2012), could be developed. Furthermore, this chapter concludes that these relationships provided essential foundations upon which various forms of capital, in particular those that have been identified in the literature as salient to the enhancement of social inclusion, could be accumulated. Consequently, Chapter 5 will build upon this argument and explore the correspondences between participation in sport and the acquisition of three forms of capital—human, social and positive psychological—which can contribute to social inclusion, in particular when expressed in relation to employability.

## CHAPTER 5: SPORT, CAPITAL ACCUMULATION AND EMPLOYABILITY—A BRIDGE TO SOCIAL INCLUSION OR A BRIDGE TOO FAR?

As mentioned, both political rhetoric and academic literature has highlighted the importance of employment status and educational attainment as antecedents of full societal membership (McDowell, 2014; Spaaij *et al.*, 2013; Kennedy, 2013; Levitas, 2005). Consequently, for populations classified as NEET or RONI, the correspondences between education, employment and social inclusion become more sensitive. This connection is further exacerbated and reinforced within the policy landscape, with NEET-focussed initiatives commonly deploying short-term, incentivised interventions which are designed solely to transition NEET populations into employment, education or training destinations through the enhancement of various forms of capital (Seddon *et al.*, 2013; Strathdee, 2013; Yates & Payne, 2006).

Therefore, as a departure point to examine how *Sport for Change* may contribute to social inclusion, this chapter, guided by the social integrationist discourse (Levitas, 2005), investigates how the programme may offer a route into paid employment. More precisely, the chapter explores how involvement in *Sport for Change* may enhance the accumulation of three forms of capital; human, social, and positive psychological, that have been identified in the literature as pertinent to enhancing employability prospects (Phillips, 2010).

### ***5.1 Capital accumulation through Sport for Change***

A clear finding from the data was the strident belief amongst the young people who participated in this study of the value of human capital as the central mechanism to evade the threat of NEET-ness. It was also evident from the data how this belief was shared by the club leaders, and reinforced as a central component of the programme's ambitions. As Amber explained, there was a concerted effort within the specification of *Sport for Change* to identify how and where sport could be used to engage young people with qualifications, not only within the formal education system, but also through vocational training. Consequently, Amber was able to report that engagement in such activities was "*considerably larger than the target we were set*", with 64 young people acquiring a qualification that would enable them to assist with activities at their sports clubs (Access Sport, 2013).

As further support for the prioritisation of human capital accumulation within the outcomes of the programme, Bobby (Napier Park Cricket Club) outlined how coaching qualifications could provide a tangible pathway into paid employment within cricket, highlighting one youth player who was now employed as a full-time cricket coach. He explained:

I'm in the process of getting a mixture of over 16 [years of age] players, adults, Dads, volunteers around the club...and put us through coaching assistant training...Hopefully a certain percentage of them will go on to do a proper Level 2 coaching course, and after they've done their level 2, then suddenly they're at [other cricket clubs] earning £20 an hour coaching kids...

As an additional finding, Amber offered substantiation for the potential of sport to act as a metaphorical 'hook' (Green, 2008) and engage young people with activities, such as qualifications and training courses, which were not immediately related to sport, but may enhance human capital. She continued:

Some [of the qualifications] are workshops and courses around working with young people with challenging behaviour, so they might end up going down a youth worker line...so we do try and open up the door and try and be as broad as possible...we want to have more opportunities laid out, even more paths they can go down. So maybe they get involved in the club and they start doing the marketing for the club and then we put them on a marketing course...sport is just the hook...

The premise which infused the logic surrounding the accumulation of human capital was further evident in the narratives of club leaders, who inferred how, through the sports club, they were able to exert their influence to re-engage, re-focus, or re-orient young people at their clubs with the formal education system. This was typified by Musaid, a leader at Victoria Sports Hub, who revealed:

...some of them have come to us and asking us that they want to get into work and this, that. We're just trying to advise them on what's the best thing for them...for me personally I would tell them to get an education...education can lead to different routes, it opens doors for you.

Evidence from the young people was also imbued with sentiments which alluded to their sporting involvement having a positive influence on their educational aspirations and pursuits. For example, Jamie noted that in the context of education he was “*not normally a focussed kinda guy*” but that he had become more attentive to his educational pursuits since he started boxing. Similarly, both Mehtin and Thaqib explained how sport acted as motivation to work harder at school, an observation which was supported by Majeed, who also offered an indication of how sporting involvement helped to re-focus his educational ambitions:

Definitely go college...I put my aim definitely, 'coz they're predicting me my grades are D's and C's, but I'll prove them wrong. [Sport] it does help...it's like a motivation. If you don't wanna train, but you know you really want it, you have to do it. So when you come up to school and wake up in the morning, you wake up early 'coz it's like an ambition, that you want to achieve something...you wanna achieve a goal.

In a similar vein, Noel reported how the guidance of staff at the Glynmore Club had enabled him to re-orient his involvement and participation in school activities (Finn, 1989), to produce strong performances in examinations and unlock opportunities for further (A Level) studies at a local Sixth Form College.

I was like troublesome...and I used to come to Glynmore and they literally told me to stay on track...they guided me...they saw my potential, basically, and through that I actually do think they helped me with my GCSEs and I managed to get 2 A\*s, 4 A's and 3 B's, so they really did help me to go through and stop doing the silliness...literally in class messing around, not paying attention and being a bit of a clown. I used to come in here every day and play a bit of football but they used to talk to me, you know, “how you doing?”, I could bring my homework in here and they'd help me...

However, the accumulation of human capital via sport was not restricted to opportunities to gain formalised knowledge through recognised qualification. For example, Faizel presented evidence of sporting involvement granting opportunities to gain workplace experience, to consolidate the human capital developed through qualifications, and accrue skills and competencies that contribute to employability (Baptiste, 2001). Through this work placement, that he had initiated and undertaken at *Access Sport*, he expressed how he was able to gain first-

hand experience of how community-focussed organisations strategize, negotiate and lead endeavours to implement enduring positive impact within identified locales.

I asked [my coach] if I could come and take part in some things, just as a start, to see how it would be to work, and from that I learnt how to do the office, how to organise things, um, recycling – even though it’s got nothing to do with BMXing – recycling stuff from the office, [and] communication with important people.

Other respondents spoke of their desire to seek out and undertake apprenticeships as opposed to prolonging their formal education, where the centrality of ‘being paid’ arose as a key discursive theme. Indeed, both Noel and Faizel mentioned how they intended to undertake a paid apprenticeship on completion of their current A Level qualifications, rather than consider higher education, while Michael, the club leader at Glynmore observed:

...they mostly want to do apprenticeship courses...you know, they don’t want to do anything without getting paid, that’s what they think, money talks...they want to be paid to do something...

More significantly, data which referred to engagement with the workplace highlighted the development of ‘softer skills’ and the significance attached to social connections and networks (Brown, 2006), to raise further insights into the manner in which the other forms of capital identified as salient to confronting NEET-ness—namely positive psychological and social capital—were able to be accessed and accumulated through sporting involvement.

With regard to positive psychological capital—and its key components of self-efficacy, resilience, hope and optimism (Luthans *et al.*, 2007)—the data revealed a range of examples where sport acted as a medium for its accumulation. For instance, both Bobby (cricket) and Alan (judo) reflected upon a number of young people who had enhanced their self-efficacy following episodes of success in sport. As Bobby revealed:

I think it’s life confidence, you know, we get some boys coming in here who are very, very shy, but after a while they realise that they’ve got some talent at the game and it brings them out of their shell.

Similarly, Noel, a young footballer at the Glynmore Club, articulated a correspondence between the self-efficacy he had acquired through leadership roles in his football team, the resulting successes he had enjoyed on the pitch, and an enhanced sense of self-efficacy to contribute vocally in other aspects of his life. He explained:

Confidence...when I play football I'm really confident. I used to be a bit more like shy, but I learnt through football that I have to speak more, communicate...so in school now I'm not too shy to put my hand up and ask or say something...

Hope and optimism were also in evidence within the narratives offered by young people at the sports clubs. Whilst deciphering the impact of sport on enhanced levels of hope and optimism was difficult to determine, Majeed provided brief insight into how membership of the Glynmore Club had presented new opportunities, altered perspectives and revitalised ambitions, alongside generating a sense of agency and internal attribution over the attainment of his aspirations (Luthans *et al.*, 2007). He explained:

I definitely want to make sure I'm a boxer. Even if I don't, I'll try opening my own [boxing] club. 'Coz I'm studying business, so I can start from the bottom and then move to the top.

However, it was the component of resilience which appeared most salient in regard to sporting involvement and the accumulation of positive psychological capital. Several of the young people who participated in the study articulated qualities that they had developed through sport which were akin to an enhanced ability to respond positively to adversity or uncertainty (Luthans *et al.*, 2007). In some cases, aspects of the sport itself were cited as pivotal to learning about resilience, most notably within the sport of BMX. As Faizel noted, resilience, or "*taking it up*", could be experienced via the risks associated with the sport:

Definitely one of the things is crashes. In normal everyday life you're not as likely to break a bone...but with BMXing it comes with that. I've learnt that if you fall down you hurt yourself – it happens...it comes with the sport – you have to *take it up* [emphasis added]...

These sentiments were shared by AJ, a BMX club leader, who further elaborated on the correspondence between BMX participation and the development of resilience.

Shit happens...you better just deal with it and pick yourself up quickly before someone runs you over...there's a certain kind of logic of 'you've gotta look after yourself, primarily...[So] you need an attitude of, um, a general kind of can do, will do, give it a go, fail...but if you don't give it a go you're never even gonna get to that stage of 'will I fail?'...[BMX]creates resilience because if you really want to do it [achieve] it's not simple.

Additional qualities associated with resilience were notable elsewhere in the data provided by the young respondents, with Terrence (a footballer) offering a detailed account of how he had become more "*patient*" through sport; an observation which complemented a recognition that success in all facets of his life required an ability to persevere and remain impervious to potential setbacks. He explained:

It's like a never ending development...and that patience and that improvement. You have to be patient about what stuff you're gonna learn next, so you don't wanna rush in and miss out the important parts. You don't want to go for the quick and easy, you need to go for the long and make sure you get a better result. So part of patience is not just at football, literally it's everyday things...like [school assessment] deadlines, you have to be patient about that...it can be anything, if, like, you're in the chicken shop, in a long line, patience and you know when it's your turn, I think I'm gonna have the best chicken, 'coz I've waited that long.

Yet again, these extracts of data convey a recurring theme surrounding the increasingly significant role that sport-based interventions, such as *Sport for Change*, have assumed "as a form of benign policing" (Green, 2007, p. 65) in reinforcing the ideals of neoliberal discourse. Data reveal that the 'qualities' (or positive psychological capital) that can be accrued, and more importantly are valorised, through engagement in sport, accentuates contemporary government messages which demonstrate contempt for welfare provision (Silk & Andrews, 2011a) and promote individual responsibility for the armament of positive psychological capital.

However, in regard to social capital accumulation, evidence of how involvement in the sports club propagated relationships, networks and social ties that would enable social mobility through employment (Granovetter, 1973), was in abundance. Perhaps inevitably, both club leaders and the young respondents presented narratives which highlighted how the environment of the

sports club had promoted a strong sense of loyalty to the club and had incubated a reimagined sense of identity which was aligned to membership of that club. For Putnam (2000), this reconstruction of identity and escalating sense of loyalty to the sporting institution typifies the development and accumulation of bonding social capital. Whilst previous literature has indicated the problematic and sinister nature of this form of social capital (Skille, 2011; Collins, 2010; Nicholson & Hoye, 2008), competing scholarship has highlighted how the accrual of bonding social capital serves a more beneficial purpose, in particular in offering personal social support for individuals who may lack reassuring or positive networks in other aspects of their lives (Kemp, 2010; Putnam, 2000). Building upon this notion, several of the young respondents articulated that the nascent relationships that they had constructed with coaches at the sports club resembled those of ‘a family’, and diverted them from other prevailing social networks which afforded uncomplicated access to crime and anti-social behaviour—a clear indication of the beneficial effects of accumulating bonding social capital. Additional evidence of ‘sport’ promoting a beneficial source of bonding social capital was presented by Keziah, a Partnerships Manager at *Capital Connect*, a local educational and apprenticeships provider who had engaged with some of the young people associated with the *Sport for Change* clubs. She observed:

You notice it actually quite significantly with the sports cohort that they build quite strong connections to each other as a cohort. You see them having lunch together and there is that sense of looking out for their cohort as they’re going through [the course], so I’ve really noticed that, that that bond is built.

In addition, the data revealed evidence of the manner in which sports participation could be utilised to cultivate a network of social ties across vertical and horizontal heterogeneous social groups (Putnam, 2000) and provide the bridging form of social capital that could enable opportunities for young people to overcome any perceived social disadvantage and foster social mobility (Coalter, 2007). The accumulation of bridging social capital was best captured by Zaeem, the leader at Victoria Sports Hub, who revealed how the initial tie that was formed between himself and the young people from the estate on which the hub was located, liberated a wealth of connections through a variety of avenues that he had acquired and developed during his own employment as a physical education teaching assistant for a youth sport foundation situated within his home borough. Zaeem disclosed:



Yeah, the good thing is...’coz we grew up in the same community, we tend to know them, like...for example, I teach one kid in a school and then, like, they’ll turn up to my club...it all like spreads out each time...and then when I bump into them you ask them, like, ‘how school’s doing, how’s your education going, are you achieving your grades, do you need any help, do you need any advice?’ We give them those stuff, we give them the facility like...’coz it’s not just [me] that try and help...we run the sports hub and do most of the work, but we’ve got friends in university and stuff like that...so we tell them that if you need any help on Maths, English, Science, you can come to us and we’ve got friends who can help you. Surprisingly, two of them actually done that...turned around and said ‘can you get us help for maths?’ Luckily, luckily, we’re very lucky...we’ve got all of that amongst our friends...within our own reach which the kids think they don’t have. Now they’ve seen that they’ve got it they ask us...

However, the data revealed that the acquisition of these singular forms of capital did not occur in a restricted fashion via individual episodes where each form of capital was generated in an isolated manner. By contrast, the accumulation of capital incorporated a blending or layering of different forms of capital whereby the aggregate of the capital acquired by the young person was greater than its constituent parts. Fundamental to this process of capital accumulation was the centrality of social connections or, to invoke Granovetter (2005), social ties, which acted as enablers to employability, and subsequently, enhanced social inclusion. The significance of ties to the engineering of employment opportunities was best exemplified through two case studies, to which the chapter now turns.

## ***5.2 Social networks, interpersonal ties and social inclusion through sport***

As mentioned, the benefits of creating productive social networks to enable social mobility, primarily through access to employment, has been well documented in the literature (see Brown *et al.*, 2011; Phillips, 2010; Coalter, 2007). For Granovetter (2005), the construction of social networks serve significant economic purposes, at both a macro- and micro-level, predominantly through, first, the transportation of vital information, second, in enacting a system for punishment and reward, and, third and perhaps most crucially, as a mechanism for the formation of trust. Furthermore, to facilitate the flow of information throughout these networks, and thus enable the economic benefits outlined above, connections, or ties, both within and between social networks, are an essential component (Granovetter, 2005; 1983;

1973). However, Granovetter's thesis is predicated on the potency of *weak* ties<sup>21</sup>, which are able to permit a more dynamic and robust flow of novel, unique or non-redundant information across often isolated, fragmented or disconnected social networks (Granovetter, 2005). Consequently, weak ties operate as vital metaphorical *bridges* between close-knit, densely formed social networks whereby those deprived of such ties become deficient of the critical information regarding, for example, opportunities within the labour market (Granovetter, 1983).

As highlighted earlier, the young people who participated in the current enquiry were prone to such social fragmentation, where the 'quarantined' existence of the urban estate restricted the conception and development of weak ties. Such findings correspond with Hall's (2002) contention that as society becomes more individualist, and shaped further by neoliberal discourse, the creation of trust—the lubricant of social networks (Fukuyama, 1999)—declines, most notably within younger generations from lower socio-economic classes. Similarly, and developing the work of Granovetter (1983), the findings of this study indicate that the close attachment to the postcode which young people in these locales possess, promotes a pervasive, almost exclusive, reliance on strong ties, which has fragmented these communities "into encapsulated networks with poor connections" (p. 213), thus limiting the personal and economic benefits that may be accrued by a wealth of weak ties. Previous research (e.g. Nicholson, Brown & Hoyer, 2014; Frost, Lightbody, & Halabi, 2013; Brown, Hoyer & Nicholson, 2012) which has examined the potential of sport clubs to generate social networks that comprise a broader array of weak ties, has been inconclusive or cautious in its findings. Consequently, evidence of how *Sport for Change* constructed metaphorical bridges between social network segments and developed the weak ties that are "vital for an individual's integration into modern society" (Granovetter, 1983, p.203), will now be explored.

In general, the data revealed limited evidence of weak ties being constructed between the sports clubs recruited to *Sport for Change* and new social networks being developed which could enhance employability. However, in the cases where the creation of such links was evident, the work consisted of engineering collaborations with established educational institutions and commercial businesses who provided employment, education or training opportunities as a core

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<sup>21</sup> Weak ties are characterised by relationship networks which are restricted in their emotional intensity, intimacy, reciprocity and time dependence (Granovetter, 1973).

component of their operations. One of the most discernible illustrations of a sports club generating a weak, yet potent, tie to enable young members to enhance social inclusion through employment, was provided by a partnership between two of the BMX clubs recruited to the *Sport for Change* project and a local social enterprise (*Spokes*) that specialised in the repair, servicing and retail of bicycles. This partnership, initiated by Luca, the coach of the two BMX clubs concerned, commenced as an informal agreement whereby club members could visit the social enterprise to maintain and repair their bicycles.

This agreement involved young members of Eagles and Fliers BMX being exposed to an intensive ten-session programme, whereby the young people could cultivate technical skills which could build the foundation for further training and qualifications in bicycle maintenance. In addition, the programme offered potential for the young people to assume a deeper interest and involvement in club activities, and instil a nascent sense of participatory citizenship (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), by equipping them with skills that could be implemented within the maintenance of equipment at the clubs' premises. Furthermore, the data revealed evidence of how young people who became engaged in the scheme were afforded access to new social networks which presented information or resources that could be utilised to the individual's advantage (Granovetter, 2005). To exemplify the benefits to human and social capital accumulation, Faizel, one recipient of the 'Bike Maintenance Scheme' explained:

I turned up to the first session and I learnt how to do this simple M-check – how to check from the start of the bike to the end rail of the bike, something simple. From that, I actually learnt that I enjoyed fixing bikes as well, and that it was pretty easy...then I got to know everyone at Spokes pretty well, and that's now one of my other connections that I made...I don't think I would have been associated with Spokes [without the BMX club].

Building upon this initial agreement, and with the input of *Access Sport*, the collaboration developed into the offer of additional opportunities for club members to continue their understanding about bicycle maintenance or undertake formally recognised qualifications in this area. For one individual (Tarren), the initial involvement with the 'Bike Maintenance Scheme' initiated a pathway that ultimately led to a paid apprenticeship with *Spokes*. When reflecting upon the cumulative effect of the initial weak tie, and in particular the beneficial impact received by Tarren, Amber commented:

...one guy [Tarren] just wanted to hang out at the shop the whole time. They said “you can come in on a Saturday and do work experience with us”. From that [he] went on to do the Level 2 certificate in bike maintenance and got linked up and then the apprenticeship...so it wasn’t all by us, but we set them off on this path and then linked them in with the right people.

For Jim, the founder of *Spokes*, the incentive to engineer opportunities for young people to obtain credentials for employment presented the foundational element of the philosophy of the social enterprise, whereby developing training opportunities for young people was not simply “an income generator”. He continued:

In terms of our employment training...we’ve got to do it for a reason, which is that we get 50 to 60% of people [trainees] into work. That is at the forefront of what we do.

A similar collaboration that *Access Sport* originated to enable young people within *Sport for Change* to broaden the limits of their social network and enhance their employability was with *Capital Connect*, a local provider of vocational training, employability skills courses and apprenticeships, predominantly within the areas of business administration, customer service, and sport. As an organisation that is devoted to providing skills training to enable access to employment opportunities for local young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, the ethos of *Capital Connect* shared many of the principles found within the sports clubs aligned to *Sport for Change* and the work of *Access Sport*. As Bryony, a Partnerships Officer at *Capital Connect*, explained:

...my role is predominantly to find organisations that we can work with who would be referring young people to us for our courses, and vice versa. And so it would be a case of really trying to prioritise those organisations who work with similar age groups, similar young people, or looking to work with NEET young people or those who are at-risk of NEET...

Within the programme logic of *Sport for Change*, this collaboration offered a vital bridge for young people to access opportunities beyond those presented by the sports club. As Amber explained:

We got in contact with Capital Connect....they’ve already got those pathways [into training] set up so we might refer a young person to them and they might go on a business administration course and then Capital Connect would have the links to that corporate company or that

corporate company and so on and so forth...so it's a mixture of us having a pathway and also linking with organisations that have those pathways set up as well.

In most cases, connecting the young person with the employment or training provider involved the facilitation of events or visits to the sports club by a representative of the provider organisation. Building upon Kemp (2010), the data indicated how these events became critical episodes of engagement to connect with youth populations who demonstrated a narrative of disillusionment, despair and apathy towards formal or institutionalised mechanisms for employment support. Consequently, the sports club embodied a vital cog in the machinery of initialising social inclusion through employability. As Michael outlined, in this sense, the Glynmore Club offered an alternative pathway to social mobility which enabled young people to circumvent the necessity to engage with the formal, established institutions for employment support, which these young people resented.

We've got something happening [in the near future] which Amber's organised, for an apprentice day and college courses...they're all coming in [to the club]. 'Cos they [the young people] now know that there is actually nothing for them on the estate or on the streets, so this is their only place to go – they can't go to the Job Centre, they go to the Job Centre they don't get any help. I mean the Job Centre will just say "alright we're gonna put you onto the Careers Service". The Careers Service give you an hour, they don't have time to talk to you. They tell you to go on to the job website. Some of the guys when they get on there, they're baffled...there's nobody actually explaining what's gonna happen...So they're all gonna come in, and hopefully we're gonna get the ball rolling for the last remaining remnants of this particular area, off the streets and in to courses.

These sentiments, in relation to a lack of personalisation in the process of enabling young people into employment, were echoed by Keziah, the Partnerships Manager at *Capital Connect*. She outlined how the relationships that had been constructed with local sports clubs were mindful of the need to be "*young people facing*" in order to provide a weak tie that was of benefit to the young person. She continued:

I think we're really keen to ensure that there's quite a high level of relational contact. So part of the work is actually being in their environment, you know, we're at a youth club or in the park, to make sure that we're actually speaking to the young people directly so they're getting enough

information and we're kind of aware of who we're trying to contact, because sometimes, you know a name gets passed and passed and passed and by the time it gets to that person they can be a bit lost. So we're spending a lot of time actively building relationships with staff teams in these organisations – just to make that career and progression advice quite personalised for the young people involved so it's not just 'here's a list of ten people that called about this course' – I think that can be quite discouraging, young people find that a bit of a turn off and a bit of a barrier.

To illustrate the centrality of this form of weak tie in expediting the process of capital accumulation, the experience of Ben offered insight into the manner in which equipping young people with a broader array of social connections act as critical bridges to capital accumulation and social inclusion. Furthermore, his narrative illustrates the integrative nature of weak ties, whereby the accrual of the diverse forms of human, social and psychological capital layers into an aggregate which surpasses attempts to enhance these individual components in isolation.

Ben, a 16 year old of Afro-Caribbean parentage, joined the Glynmore Club in 2009 as the club offered him with a convenient and accessible opportunity to join a football team situated a matter of metres from his home on one of the local residential estates. Whilst Ben offered a typical narrative relating to his experience of the sports club, in that it had presented him with a wealth of possibilities that diverted his life towards more positive destinations and enabled him to “*see the world in a different perspective*”, there was also evidence of his participation at the club providing more substantive options in relation to social inclusion through employability. Uppermost within these projections, were two apprenticeships to which Ben had applied and been successfully admitted, both of which were directly attributable to an initial visit to the Glynmore Club by a staff member at *Capital Connect*. As Ben explained:

I'm doing an apprenticeship as it stands...it's a coaching apprenticeship with a company called Limetree. So they put me on my FA Level 1 [coaching course], and I've completed it and now I'm doing my FA Level 2. I'm coaching Under 10s and I'm also an assistant in a school in [East London]. I get paid for that. [But] I've changed my apprenticeship now – I'm working in the Olympic Park Aquatic Centre doing a customer services apprenticeship with business administration. That might lead to like a manager-kind of role in the future. I got emailed it by a lady that came to the Glynmore Youth Club to try to help us get apprenticeships and then from there, it's progressing slowly, but I got hired...

When reflecting on the process of acquiring these apprenticeship opportunities, Ben referred to the critical role adopted by the sports club in providing the weak tie that had been generated with *Capital Connect*. In addition, he noted how the initial weak tie had developed his relational network—or as he referred to them: “*branches...that can help support me*”—which, in turn, had permitted access to forms of “non-redundant information” (Granovetter, 2005, p.35) that generated further apprenticeship opportunities. He continued:

Michael came to me and told me about this Capital Connect and he said “put your details through and they’ll contact you” and they contacted me and from there they called me and said “yeah, we’ve got a few apprenticeships available for you”. [Also] on my apprenticeship I’m currently doing (at Limetree Sports), three people got transferred from Capital Connect to the apprenticeship (at the Olympic Park) and they told me a bit about it and I was like “okay, fair enough, I’m gonna research into it and find out about it”. It was an apprenticeship forwarded through the actual Olympic company and then [a local leisure provider] linked it together, for a customer service apprenticeship. It starts as a supervisor then it ranks up and keeps ranking up and gets to a deputy role and that’s where I’m looking to go...roughly two to three years. So hopefully I can get there – I start now my Level 2 and then get to my Level 4. For me personally, I believe that the customer service and business administration role kind of suits me – I can picture myself in that kind of environment.

Within these excerpts, it becomes visible how an initial weak tie (namely the collaboration between the training provider and the sports-based charity) propagates an accumulation of the various forms of capital outlined above. More specifically, human capital is assimilated through the technical knowledge acquired through the apprenticeship training; social capital is engendered through an enhancement and strengthening of existing and nascent mutual acquaintances (Granovetter, 2005; Putnam, 2000); while elements of positive psychological capital—most evidently hope and optimism (Luthans *et al.*, 2007)—are observable through the potential of paid employment within the customer services industry.

For Putnam (2000), the weak tie that emerged between Ben and *Capital Connect*, which was initiated through other connections within his burgeoning social network, both exemplified and was indicative of the inherent benefits that can be acquired through bridging social capital. More specifically, this chain of connections demonstrated how “disparate elements of the

community” (Putnam, 2000, p. 7) had become enmeshed to enable social mobility. Furthermore, Ben’s narrative illustrated how trust, a further advantage of bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000), had been created between the various organisations and actors within this network, to offer potential for additional reciprocal activity to proceed, across and between these diverse social institutions, which could benefit other members of this network, most notably other young people who were members of the sports club.

A concluding observation from the data was the manner in which narratives akin to those presented above provide a discursive foundation upon which the initially weak ties not only enable the economic benefits of social networks to emerge (Granovetter, 2005), but become more durable and facilitate a deeper sense of reciprocity and generalised trust within a social network (Baliamoune-Lutz, 2011; Kemp, 2010; Putnam, 2000). Consequently, such discourse paves a well-trodden thoroughfare for successive club members to pursue in attempting to attain their own employment aspirations. For example, Dwayne, classified as NEET at time of interview, was able to perpetuate the reliance on the same initial weak tie between the Glynmore Club and *Capital Connect* to launch his journey towards employment, divulging how he was “*waiting for [the club leader] to get someone here [to the youth club] and have my time just to talk up and let my word out*”.

This discourse was echoed by Amber, the Programme Leader at *Access Sport*, who articulated her belief that the creation and management of weak ties offered the most critical element within the success of interventions which utilise sport as the precursor for transformative social change. She stated:

There are a lot of levels to it [creating links]...it hasn’t been straightforward and it’s taken a long time to map out. You don’t see the rewards immediately, but further down the line it’s going to hold the gems where you can say ‘right, we actually got somebody through this entire programme’...but I would definitely say that we have to be working with a lot of other people to make this possible...

However, as alluded to by Amber here, what became clear from the narratives of those involved in generating the initial weak tie, was the complex, fragile and time-intensive nature of these



partnerships, which required careful management and maintenance to enable young people to continue to enhance their employability prospects. For Jim, the partnership between BMX club, sports-based charity and social enterprise offered a gamut of potential opportunities embedded within the concept of generalised reciprocity (Kemp, 2010), whereby favours, confidence and trust between the three organisations could be stored and capitalised upon in the future. As Jim observed:

Obviously they're [the BMX clubs and Access Sport] based locally, we're all in the same borough and obviously we're all doing quite a lot of stuff around the Olympic [legacy projects].

Similarly, Bryony, the Partnerships Officer at *Capital Connect*, highlighted the importance of generalised reciprocity within the ties that she had engineered with both *Access Sport* and the clubs associated with *Sport for Change*. She explained:

...the ultimate aim is to ensure that that organisation [sports club] and those particular people within that organisation, they know us so well and they're so embedded that we know that they'll be sending us the right people. That's why we want to communicate to those exact people because they're working directly with young people, they have the relationships, they have the trust.

Nevertheless, in order to maintain these ties, and sustain the generalised reciprocity that accompanied it, the data revealed how specific people within the implementation chain enacted a pivotal role. For example, all respondents who commented on the management of these reciprocal networks agreed that the constant turnover of staff within the various organisations involved had impeded the effectiveness of these ties in facilitating training and employment opportunities for young people. This was captured prophetically by Jim, who noted how Luca, the coach at both BMX clubs, assumed a pivotal role in creating the conduit between sports club and social enterprise—a role that he was currently unable to fulfil whilst he had returned home to Brazil for family reasons.

[Luca] he's quite dynamic...I think it's like all things...there are a few people who are really passionate about what they do but also have the skills to take it beyond just a very small community programme on their estate, you know, proactive and get out there and shout about it [and make] other people listen and hear and then connect.

### 5.3 Summary

This chapter has presented examples of where participation at the sports club has enhanced the elements of capital that have been noted in the literature as pertinent to employability (Strathdee, 2013; Phillips, 2010). Furthermore, the chapter revealed how young people were afforded specific pathways in education, training and employment which otherwise did not exist or were unavailable to them without their membership of the club. However, what became clear, is that the locations for these sporting activities—or to be more precise, the personnel who facilitated the activities within these clubs—provided vital points of engagement in steering the extent to which sport can be used as a means to enhance capital, and, subsequently, social inclusion. Building upon previous literature which has identified the transformative role that sport leaders can assume within the discourse which surrounds the utility of sport to address broader social concerns (see Morgan & Bush, 2014; Coalter, 2013), this chapter concludes that the potential for capital enhancement is only likely to be realised when the sports club concerned, and more specifically, the personnel within it, is attuned to aspects of social justice. Developing the concept of community consciousness, whereby the people involved within a social institution possess a political awareness of the issues of concern within the local community, and, more critically, recognise how these issues impact on both their own lives and the lives of individuals and families within that local community (Henderson & Thomas, 2013), this chapter revealed that club leaders must recognise the necessity to confront and attain social, in addition to sporting, objectives, whereby the attainment of sporting objectives become subsidiary to the role of facilitating individual mobility and incubating community development (Coakley, 2002).

Yet, despite this chapter presenting evidence to suggest that all three forms of capital identified within this study could be enhanced, to make a statement that asserts that sport participation contributes to social inclusion, and which confirms the assumptions that often appear within the rhetoric of related policy, is far from conclusive. Instead, this chapter concludes that sport participation *may* enhance these forms of capital, and, following Coalter (2007), that a more detailed understanding of the sufficient conditions which enable sport participation to contribute to social inclusion is required. Consequently, Chapter 6 will analyse the programme theory of *Sport for Change* to unearth the sufficient conditions of this programme and contribute to the debate about ‘what works’.

## CHAPTER 6: UNLOCKING THE PROGRAMME THEORY OF ‘SPORT FOR CHANGE’—WHAT WORKS?

Under quantitative metrics, the *Access Sport* delivery of *Sport for Change* reveals clear evidence of success through the accomplishment of all key performance indicators agreed with *Comic Relief*. More specifically, according to *Access Sport* (2013) reports, 1,091 young people from the designated locales for the project were engaged in outreach sporting programmes, including 297 classified as NEET or RONI (target = 40); 337 young people became members of the sports clubs identified for the project (target = 30); 17 existing club coaches or volunteers attended training workshops on youth development (target = 3); and 64 young people acquired qualifications to enable them to support club activities (target = 3). In addition, 4 young people experienced work placement opportunities, 1 accepted an apprenticeship position, and a further 19 became employed (part-time) as BMX coaches (*Access Sport*, 2013). In sum, this data would suggest that the programme works—outcomes were achieved, young people at-risk of becoming NEET were engaged in socially legitimised activity, and a proportion of these young people acquired skills, qualifications and accreditations which could enable access to the employment market.

However, the central concern of the realist approach to programme evaluation is to delve beyond these quantitative metrics and elicit the sufficient conditions which can inform future programme design by offering salient theoretical and practical understandings pertaining to programme efficacy (Coalter, 2013; 2007; Pawson, 2013; 2006; Sanderson, 2002). Accordingly, the analysis presented within this chapter is informed by Coalter’s appeal to reify the sufficient conditions of sport-based interventions and extract the evidence necessary to substantiate the design of programmes which utilise sport as a means to address social concerns. More specifically, the chapter explores the conditions which possess salience in relation to the initial recruitment of programme participants, the type of sporting involvement that is necessary to enhance social inclusion, and attempt to unveil the precise benefits (if any) that are conferred by each specific sport offered within *Sport for Change*.

### ***6.1 Recruitment to sport—the precursor to change***

According to Hartmann and Kwauk (2011) the strategies which are utilised to recruit and engage participants with a social programme adopt a critical role, both within the retention of participants and, ultimately, the success of the programme. However, these authors assert that recruitment assumes an even greater importance within programmes which are “aimed at development among otherwise marginalised, disaffected youth who can be difficult to locate much less engage” (Hartmann & Kwauk, 2011, p. 290).

Building upon the work of Coalter (2013), the recruitment of participants to the clubs identified by the *Sport for Change* project could be classified into three broad categories: i) ‘open access’; ii) ‘relatively open access’; and iii) ‘targeted’. The first category contains sport-based programmes which are available to all young people but are offered within designated locales which display characteristics of deprivation (Coalter, 2013). Consequently, ‘open access’ programmes recruit participants through self-selection with the expectation that individuals from the targeted population will be engaged (Coalter, 2013). This approach to recruitment was highly visible within the *Access Sport* project, and indeed predominated within the endeavours to access young people who were considered at-risk of NEET-ness. As Amber, the programme leader explained:

It is difficult for us to know for sure... but because of the areas we are working in, because we are really in those disadvantaged areas...I'd like to think that we are still getting to some of those [deprived] people with the open-access stuff...but it is a numbers game with the open-access stuff and the more than we can do [the more likely we will reach our targeted population].

Subsequently, the club leaders referred to a plethora of strategies that they had implemented to engage young people with their clubs which aligned with notions of ‘open access’ recruitment. These activities ranged from taster-sessions at a specific club or at a recognisable community facility (such as a local park), to more focussed promotional activities which utilised both social media and more traditional forms of marketing. For instance Luca summarised the approaches taken at Eagles BMX, which were indicative of many of the clubs involved in the project.

We do Facebook, webpage, online stuff, all done by volunteers, we do flyers. We sometimes do BMX displays...we got 20 bikes in the local park and did a little track on the grass and 300 kids passed by in one day...[so] all the school kids in the borough got to know BMX.

However, a common mode of recruitment, which spanned all of the clubs involved in *Sport for Change*, related to ‘word-of-mouth’ advertising (Shreffler & Ross, 2013) and the importance of exploiting informal social networks to recruit participants. To illustrate, the data revealed how all of the young participants in the study attributed their initial involvement with their sports club through a contact within their existing social network, most notably through a family connection.

Data from the club leaders further emphasised the central importance of social networks in recruiting new participants, with Alan revealing that in recruiting young people to Central Judo “*we’ve had more people come to us through word-of-mouth than advertising*”. Alan also indicated how young people who were already subscribed members of the club utilised their personal networks to encourage further participation and membership, an observation supported by Amber, who alluded to how word-of-mouth strategies involving existing participants were integral to the open access recruitment which featured heavily within the programme. She mentioned:

If you have a young person who is almost a champion for the club, they just go out and tell their mates and they do the recruitment for you. By using the young people from the club...if they can go out and bring their mates that’s probably when we’re getting access to more of the ‘right kind’ of people.

Despite the clear attraction and widespread deployment of ‘open access’ recruitment, for Coalter (2013) such programmes operate on “an implicit deficit model based on an environmental fallacy” (p. 7) related to an assumption that all young people residing in targeted locales exhibit or possess the characteristics of an at-risk population. Moreover, given the self-selecting nature of ‘open access’ recruitment, it is often young people who receive parental support and encouragement to attend who engage, as opposed to the targeted population who often receive very limited support to engage with community activities (Nudzor, 2010). Consequently, Coalter (2013) offers caution about the efficacy and suitability of such recruitment strategies, an

assumption that was clearly evident from the data. When reflecting on this recruitment strategy, Amber observed:

...obviously if we put on a session at a club and we promote it, the chances are it's more likely for a young person who has very encouraging parents or someone who is prepared to drop them off that's going to turn up. But because of the areas we are working in, I'd like to think that it's not only those kind of people...we try and cover the bases...and at the end of the day we want more people attending the club...you know, young people doing sport is a great thing, if we can get to the minority groups as well, [that's a bonus].

Many of the strategies and challenges contained within the 'open access' approach were visible within the second recruitment category that was observed—termed 'relatively open access' (Coalter, 2013). As an extension of the previous recruitment method, this type of recruitment combines the outreach activities highlighted above with targeted procedures aimed "to attract young people who were clearly at-risk" (Coalter, 2013, p.7). However, in doing so, the intention was not to stigmatise those at-risk, but to socially integrate them into activities which are available to the wider population (Coalter, 2013). Whilst evidence of this 'semi-targeted' approach was limited, there were some examples in the data. For instance, Amber outlined how the establishment of one specific club was founded upon a targeted approach in a specified location, but adopted aspects of the 'open access' approach to limit any potential stigmatisation.

The [Victoria multi-sports hub] project is quite a good example....we know those kids hadn't been targeted before...I went down and spoke to them...They're doing bugger all and they're just smoking weed all day and sitting in their council estate...so that's one of the best ways of getting to a new group of at-risk young people...but it's not always easy, you have to be talking to a lot of people to get there in the end, but that's a good way of getting to a new targeted group.

Similarly, Bobby highlighted aspects of the 'relatively open access' category within the recruitment activities of his cricket club, explicating the attempt to socially integrate a targeted group within a community activity that was accessible for all (Kelly, 2011).

Some of it [the recruitment] has been as I've been walking around. I'll go up to kids in the park and say 'do you know about Napier Park Cricket Club' and...yeah, they'll look at you very

suspiciously [laughs]...but then three or four weeks later they'll turn up and go 'you was talking to us in the park', you know...

Again, the data revealed specific challenges associated with this category of recruitment, most notably in accurately measuring the effectiveness of the programme in accessing the targeted population, a challenge which often obfuscates programme evaluation and exaggerates the positive social benefits of sport (Coalter, 2007). As Amber revealed:

[It] was hard to track because someone might have attended something somewhere...you know an outreach...but then knowing they'd come to the club as a result of that, or knowing that they'd actually attended that club...again, complete nightmare to track.

The final recruitment category related to fully targeted approaches which aim to engage an identified population by utilising the sport setting as the social context to provide further services which may address issues of social exclusion and integrate the targeted population into mainstream activity (Coalter, 2013). This approach to recruitment was clearly evident in the data, and was typified by a 'top-down' system which was implemented and catalysed by *Access Sport*. More precisely, this involved the systematic identification of organisations that could provide a portal to the targeted population by creating a "*map of partners*". As Amber explained:

We identified organisations that were already working with young people that we know are at risk of crime, anti-social behaviour or education failure. We then go and have a conversation with them and talk about what kind of provision we can offer, what we think might work for that group...Normally, the really targeted stuff tended to be a block of 6 to 10 sessions with a group that we had identified...

Clearly, by isolating the targeted population and designing tailored, bespoke programmes which are cognisant of the interests of this population, as well as the over-arching objectives of the initiative, presents potential benefits to the attainment of programme outcomes and addresses the issues and limitations which permeate 'open access' recruitment. Indeed, support for these externally-driven, deterministic approaches prevail in much social policy (Hylton & Totten,

2013) and receive substantial endorsement at an institutional level. This was evident from the data, as Amber revealed.

It's literally a case of making it as easy and accessible as possible...is it taking sport to them [the target population] or is it them coming to the club, what works better? Do we need a guardian with them, do we need this that and the other? The more [targeted recruitment] we do, even though it's a lot more time consuming – if we could do a lot of this we would have more impact on these [social outcomes]. [W]orking with someone like *Comic Relief*...obviously they like to see the numbers at the end of the day like any funder, but they are really, really interested in the process...so, spending more time on [targeted recruitment] they will approve of...

However, the data revealed a series of challenges which have distinct, not to mention critical, implications for the advocacy of targeted recruitment as a sufficient condition of programmes of this nature. The first of these challenges resonates with the issues outlined previously surrounding the 'quarantined' existence of urban life (Paton *et al.*, 2012), whereby the physical positioning of the sports programme and the necessity for targeted young people to often have to cross a symbolic boundary (Small *et al.*, 2010) to access the programme was evident. For Alan, the difficulties of implementing a more targeted programme at Central Judo were crystallised by this issue.

[The programme] involved young people who'd been referred to [pupil referral units] (PRUs). I looked at it and thought 'okay', but the difficulty is that the dojo<sup>22</sup> is here at the school and they would have to come to the school. Maybe if we'd had more mobile coaches to go into the referral centres, maybe, that would have worked better.

A second challenge identified by the data coheres strongly with scholarly critiques of 'top-down', deterministic approaches to programme design. More specifically, these critiques accentuate how those with power retain absolute control over provision (Hylton & Totten, 2013) despite possessing a detached or idealistic understanding of the programme aims, often alongside a poor appreciation of the complexities of the context in focus (Coalter, 2007; Coakley, 2002). This was highlighted by Michael, who viewed the provision of deterministic, 'top-down' programmes

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<sup>22</sup> The term dojo refers to a training facility for the practice of traditional Japanese martial arts.



as problematic in engaging young people and building a level of acceptance to initiate the process of social inclusion.

They send these guys to places...but when they meet up with the other guys it's not something they're actually interested in. They go in, they can't wait to get out of there, and as soon as they get out of there, they just go back and regroup with their mates – you've not really engaged them and got into their mind. I've watched them...you know, just stare...and look at the clock, you know 'this'll be over in 25 minutes'. So I feel that defeats the object. You've got to try to get in and rattle their cage, you can open that first door, [then] you can go through the other doors.

For Amber, this challenge of engagement and generating acceptance was of paramount concern in programmes involving targeted recruitment. She mentioned:

It would lying if I said this sort of stuff was easy because a lot of the time...the [young people] would just sit out or not partake if they didn't like it...or they'd complain and they'd said "I don't wanna go back there"...obviously it wasn't like that for all of them but working with these groups it does take time and you have to build up trust with the coach...it's a long process.

However, an interesting finding from the data, which corresponds with the literature on strategies to address issues concerning NEET populations (e.g. Strathdee, 2013; Spandler, 2007; Yates & Payne, 2006), revealed how the ubiquitous presence of neoliberal governance and the necessity for providers to exceed agreed, quantifiable targets, acted as a further constraint to the efficacy of targeted initiatives. As Amber explained:

If you work with a [PRU], that PRU probably gets contacted by people like us all the time saying "we really want to get access to your kids". So these kids are dealt all these different opportunities and they don't necessarily see them as valuable, they are probably like "I did paintballing last week and now I'm doing this this week"...Almost because these at-risk kids are the ones that everybody wants to be working with, you face these things where people are fighting over them for their stats and their numbers...

More precisely, it would appear that the saturated arena of providers who attempt to engage young people at-risk of NEET-ness in order to meet numerical performance indicators and

demonstrate their worth for further investment presents two additional, inter-related problems. First, the flooded market-place presents targeted young people with a suite of opportunities and experiences which they might not access were it not for their targeted status, which may act as a disincentive to moving beyond 'at-risk' status. Second, the data revealed that such opportunities appear to be taken for granted, or that the experience is often fleeting. Consequently, such engagement often inhibits the deeper involvement with the club that is necessary to strengthen the bonds of trust which promote recognition and acceptance—the conceptual foundation stones for social inclusion (Rose *et al.*, 2012; Whittaker, 2010).

Therefore, the data concur with Kelly (2011, p.145) who observes that:

targeted intervention programmes are clearly unable to significantly impact on many of the processes serving to 'exclude' young people in neoliberal, post-industrial societies; at best they can alleviate some of the consequences for a minority.

Consequently, whilst programmes which foreground targeted recruitment may hold precedence in the policy arena, at the practitioner level, the challenges which are evident within such initiatives have promoted the clear predominance of 'open access' programmes, chiefly as they pose comparatively fewer implementation issues, whilst still (partially) addressing the objectives of social inclusion initiatives. Moreover, sport-based programmes which adopt 'open access' recruitment cohere with neoliberal discourse which positions the individual as the primary initiator for their own destiny, to further reflect the double movement of autonomization and responsabilization (Rose, 2000a) in programmes designed to enhance social inclusion. As such, 'open access' programmes illustrate a tension whereby citizenship is conditional upon acts of consumption (Paton *et al.*, 2012), to further establish a 'politics of conduct' (Rose, 2000a) which involves assuming individual responsibility for social inclusion and socio-economic mobility. Furthermore, given that 'open access' programmes place a heavy reliance on a largely voluntary workforce to recruit, deliver and engage young people, demonstrates further evidence as to how neoliberal governance has altered the relationship between the individual and the state towards one where government is no longer obligated to provide for and resolve all of society's needs (Rose, 2000a), and hence reinforce the prominence of 'open access' approaches as the preferred recruitment method.

Critically, a further implication of the predominance attached to open access recruitment is the central importance of informal social networks as a necessary and fundamental departure point to enable initial engagement with the sports programme. Building upon Granovetter (2005), the evidence infers that young people who possess a broader network of weak ties are likely to be advantaged by the ‘word-of-mouth’ recruitment that prevails within the identified programme. Consequently, these young people, through their broader array of ties, command a stronger position to connect with sports-based interventions and receive the benefits which these programmes may afford in relation to social inclusion. Conversely, the findings would also indicate that young people with comparatively fewer connections are at the behest of statistical probability in order to become engaged in sport based interventions, whereby a chance encounter with an outreach or recruitment activity forms the entry point of their engagement.

Alternatively, and invoking the philosophical intentions of realist evaluation (Pawson, 2006), the findings present scope for policy makers and programme designers to glean insight from the aspects of targeted recruitment strategies which possess salience in contributing to programme efficacy. Within the insights garnered by this research, two principal insights emerge. First, and building upon Nicholson *et al.* (2011), the reliance on community sports clubs and a volunteer work-force to be the transformative agents of change and deliver the outcomes of critical social policy programmes is problematic, most pertinently given the propensity for many community sports clubs to concentrate their provision around traditional notions of sport rather than youth development (Morgan & Bush, 2014; Skille, 2011). Indeed, the findings indicate the complex and intricate conditions which accompany programmes that utilise sport as a means for social change, which suggest that the personnel employed to deliver such programmes require specialist knowledge of youth work but also must be attentive to how sporting experiences can be shaped to promote social change. Interestingly, among the club leaders who participated in this research, some had experience, either paid or voluntary, in youth work, and were able to translate this to the sports club. However, yet again, for young people to accrue the social benefits of the sports programme relies heavily on statistical probability and connecting with a sports club that prioritises youth development over sport-based objectives.

The second insight relates to the need to deviate away from the short-term, outcome-oriented approaches to the design and evaluation of these programmes. While short-term, numerically-

focussed approaches to sport policy have received significant criticism elsewhere in the literature (see Nicholson, Hoyer & Houlihan, 2011), in relation to the current study, the apparent difficulties and failings attached to targeted recruitment strategies has to some extent disenfranchised volunteer coaches and club leaders (Nicholson *et al.*, 2011), and largely ignored the complex, nuanced and time-laden nature of utilising sport for social change.

## ***6.2 The beneficial effects of sport—Which sports? Which participants? Which conditions?***

As noted above, the primary objective of this chapter is to present a more complete depiction of the role that ‘sport’ assumes in contributing to the outcomes of *Sport for Change*. However, as Coalter (2013; 2007) reminds us, sport, as a collective noun, may mislead investigation into the social benefits of such programmes, given the distinctiveness of each sport offering and its subsequent impact on the interactions they elicit. Consequently, a more nuanced understanding of how particular sports may stimulate social benefits is required to maximise the potential of sporting experiences in attaining desired outcomes (Dacombe, 2013; Coalter, 2007).

As a departure point, Green (2008) advocates that coherence must exist between the composition of the sporting experience and the preferences of the target population. Findings from the investigation of *Sport for Change* indicate how the necessity to articulate the sport offering with the context for implementation was predominant within the initial logic of the programme design. More specifically, this was attained through the identification of sports, and clubs, that were deemed attractive to young people at-risk of NEET-ness. As Amber explained:

I guess it was probably a case of the more cool and urban sports are going to be more popular with the young people we want to work with...so there is a tendency to go with the trendier sports, because I don't know if a 16 year old boy would go "tennis?...I haven't played tennis before, I'd love to do it".

In other cases, the selection of a particular sport or club was founded on further cultural factors, most notably through the inclusion of cricket to appeal to a community that was composed predominantly of south Asian ethnicity. Indeed, much of the perceived success of this

programme was attributed to the coherence between the sport and the interests of the community. As Bobby revealed:

I'd noticed the level of enthusiasm there was for cricket in the area with people playing on local parks and creating their own cricket strips on the parks. In the park behind me there used to be a hundred kids every weekend in the summer playing different cricket games all over the park...[so] the passion is cricket, and they watch the IPL (Indian Premier League), they watch the Big Bash (Australian Twenty-Twenty League) and they know all the players and they come here and want to emulate them.

Consequently, to disclose elements of sufficiency within the programme, a more specific analysis of each of the sports offered through *Sport for Change* may glean further insights. Within the sport of BMX, the initial attraction of the sport appeared to stem from the extreme nature of the sport, where young people could experience the thrill associated with the perilous aspects of the sport, but within a controlled environment. Mirroring aspects of diversionary activities (Nicholls, 2007; Green, 2008), AJ explained how the “*aggressive, all out*” elements of BMX presented experiences which enabled a sense of escapism from the familiar, often negatively construed, ‘attractions’ that were available in their residential locales. This was verified by Luca who noted that BMX appealed:

...because of the fact that it's an extreme sport and it's dangerous – full stop. If a kid says “I ride a BMX” the other kids go “wow, but that's dangerous” and that's what makes that kid cool because he does something dangerous.

A further, reported attraction of BMX was the individualistic aspect of the sport. For AJ, this attraction resonated with the earlier recounted discourses which infuse life within the urban, residential estate, whereby social mobility is the responsibility of the individual (Rose, 2000a). He continued:

...to some extent it is having something to prove themselves at...a proving ground...Something like BMX...it's an individual thing...it's not about the team...[BMX] it's like “go do it, go somewhere, get somewhere, achieve something”, but it's all on your terms...its very much personal.

A final, perhaps unexpected, benefit attributed to BMX was how the danger, risk and inevitability of injury which accompanied participation, acted as a catalyst to transform perceptions about wider society. This was captured most appositely by Luca:

BMX is an extreme sport; so at some point they will hurt themselves. I think they have certain experiences that they wouldn't have in life if it wasn't for the BMX club...so even the fact that they hurt themselves I think it helps a lot...it changes the way kids see other kids, and life...If you don't hurt yourself ever, you don't even know how it feels – that's why kids get knives and go stabbing other kids because they have no idea what that's about.

However, despite explicit benefits being claimed by each of the specific sports offered within *Sport for Change*, the most significant, and indeed, unanimously agreed benefit which could be accrued through participation in any of the sports, related to the development of *discipline*. Whilst the cliché of 'sport promoting discipline' has been well versed in the literature pertaining to the educative function of sport and, indeed, has emerged as a central aspect of much policy rhetoric (see Coalter, 2013; Hastie, de Ojeda & Luquin, 2011; Bailey, Armour, Kirk, Jess, Pickup & Sandford, 2009; Green, 2008), the findings of this study demonstrate congruence between the notion of discipline and the broader concept of citizenship. As mentioned, for Westheimer and Kahne (2004), citizenship can be conceptualised as three contrasting visions encompassing: i) the personally responsible citizen; ii) the participatory citizen; and iii) the justice-oriented citizen. Much of the data revealed coherence between participation in sport and articulations of the personally responsible citizen, whereby the focus of the concept aligns with elements such as social responsibility, law adherence, and the acquisition of mainstream societal values, such as honesty, integrity and hard work (Paton *et al.*, 2012; ten Dam *et al.*, 2011; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004; Rose, 2000a). For example, Bobby, in de-constructing his understanding of discipline, pointed to the pivotal techniques of cricket as an outlet to securing these values:

In cricket terms, the fielding becomes chaotic if people aren't disciplined...you know teaching them the responsibility of when that ball's coming towards them they've got to make an attempt to stop it...and the message gets through to them you know, they begin to realise that if you do things in the right way you get good results, if you do things in the wrong way you get bad results and that can take them into life, as well, you know, if they try to cut corners they're going to miss out on things.

Similarly, and perhaps unsurprisingly, the ‘discipline’ narrative, and its contribution to personal responsibility, was heavily apparent within the potential benefits accrued by participation in the two combat sports—boxing and judo. Both coaches and young participants of these sports shared exacting accounts as to how participation conferred features of the personally responsible citizen.

Jamie: With boxing it’s really changed my life...it’s like kept me to be patient, calm, and hard-working and disciplined and self-respectful towards others. So I know if I show respect to them I’ll get respect back out of them. Respect takes you a long way.

Jay: [Boxing] adds a sort of discipline to your life. I used to have a lot of problems with school work – not so much not being able to do it, just not being able to be bothered to do it once I got home. Boxing helped me, it shows you...it lets you know that when you need to you can go further than you normally do and you can push yourself.

Malcolm: People will say “why introduce boxing?” Boxing for me was part of the discipline, it teach people respect, it teach manners, it helps sort out the attitude...you know and that’s what it’s all about.

Further evidence of sport participation promoting socially responsible citizenship arose through articulations of rule adherence, whereby young people became educated about club regulations (both written and unwritten) to develop a sensitivity towards their own self-conduct (Paton *et al.*, 2012; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). For example, as Dwayne explained, without the guidance of the Glynmore Club, his life would probably consist of “*doing bollocks in the roads*”, while the club’s leaders, Michael and Malcolm, highlighted how the reinforcement of club rules, both explicitly and more covertly, propagated a sense of responsibility within the young people at the club.

Michael: We don’t have to tell them [the rules], because, we always make them [the young people] know that we trust...we don’t have to search them if they come through the door [of the club]. They should know not to come through the door with anything illegal. The moment they leave the door we always say you can do what you want, but it won’t be us coming to run to your aid.

Malcolm: ...[we've] got all the rules to remind you, we'll tell you them, but if we [remind them] too much, then obviously, [it shows they] don't care – you've gotta learn to care, you gotta learn to respect, you gotta learn to love, you've gotta learn to like – and that's the way it goes, it's simple...how you gonna get on in life otherwise.

However, the most pronounced example of participation contributing to notions of the personally responsible citizen was exhibited by Mehtin, a young man of Turkish descent, who currently attended a local further education college and boxed at the Glynmore Club. When reflecting on his participation in boxing and its positive contribution to his life, Mehtin disclosed:

Boxing...in its own changed everything all the way around...’coz if I didn’t do boxing I don’t know what would’ve happened. I was always in trouble. It was just so difficult...it was boxing that changed it all the way around and I’m now where I’m seeing past [my difficulties]. [Boxing] it’s how you live, the healthy lifestyle, and the way you eat, do your runs, the way you rest, the way you sleep, the way you wake up – it’s like a routine...it’s how you live and do things right or wrong. If you do things wrong, if you do one thing wrong it’s not gonna work out.

These insights into the role that boxing assumed in developing the qualities of the personally responsible citizen were verified by Michael, who had become Mehtin’s mentor at Glynmore. Michael explained:

...his school life was totally downhill, constantly fighting, always in trouble, they just couldn’t control him in school. One day, he was outside, and I see him so said to him “what’s wrong with ya”. “Ah, I’ve just been suspended, kicked out again, for fighting”...I said “I want you tonight to come to Glynmore, come tonight”...He came in and they started training him up...his attitude changed, his punctuality at school rose, his grades changed. He’s learnt to channel his anger. He’s now at college, which I didn’t think he’d get to...totally changed character. He’s changed. He’s actually doing something more positive with his life. His parents are so proud of him...he’s changed. He’s gone from five per cent to a hundred per cent and you can’t knock him...you know, the dedication...he’s here every single night.



Clearly, there is a significant moral aspect to Mehtin's narrative, typified by the manner in which boxing has instilled several desirable personal qualities and traits that align with understandings related to the personally responsible citizen (Paton *et al.* 2012; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Moreover, Mehtin's narrative resonates with the foundations of the moral underclass discourse (Levitas, 2005), primarily through expectations regarding social functionality, but also via acceptance through the espousal of conventional values as the conduit to garner inclusion within mainstream society (Rose *et al.*, 2012). In short, this is a narrative about becoming more patient, calmer, dedicated, routinised—about becoming a responsible citizen. Through boxing, Mehtin has acquired aspiration, a routine for his life, a purpose, an understanding of right from wrong, and potentially a passport to a more desirable life. In addition, when outlining his boxing ambitions, Mehtin mentioned that “*nothing is stopping him*”—his destiny is both achievable and within the grasp of his own beliefs, his dedication, his routine. This sense of agency was not necessarily apparent in other aspects of his life suggesting that boxing had become liberating. Through boxing he possesses some form of control over his life—a sense of autonomization and responsabilization (Rose, 2000a)—which will offer him societal membership and citizenship.

The utilisation of sport, and indeed boxing, as an instrument to instil morality and personally responsible forms of citizenship is not uncommon within the extant literature. Indeed, for Wacquant (2004), the sporting context provides “a machinery designed to fabricate the spirit of discipline, group attachment, respect for others as for self, and autonomy of will” (p. 15). However, quite patently, Mehtin's narrative is indicative of, and resonates with, the manipulative influence of neoliberal governance as it contrives to promote obedience and minimise identifiable risks to society (Winlow & Hall, 2013; Dean, 2010). Nevertheless, despite the distinct benefits to a functional (neoliberal) society that the development of personally responsible citizenship conveys, this category of citizenship possesses clear shortcomings in promoting more active and democratic forms of citizenship, which accentuate social justice and civic engagement (see Hoskins & Mascherini, 2009; Lauder *et al.*, 2006; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

The findings from the current investigation indicate instances of these more active forms of citizenship being enhanced through participation in sport. However, critically, these more active

forms of citizenship can only be assumed when the individual connects in a deeper mode of involvement with their sporting participation through engagement with roles that transcend beyond merely 'playing' the sport. Advancing the sentiments of Harris (1998), the data reveals how young people who expose themselves to experiences within community settings which enable them to encounter social problems, and design solutions to these problems to foster civil society, are more likely to develop the qualities of the participatory or justice-oriented citizen.<sup>23</sup>

Within *Sport for Change*, endeavours which were aimed to incubate more active forms of citizenship were most visible through efforts to engage young people in coaching opportunities at their respective sports clubs. As Amber explained:

[We] encouraged our clubs to have in mind...identifying people who show that interest in doing something slightly more. There are some kids who just won't ever want to doing anything other than play...we can't force it...but we've always been "right have a think about coaching".

Consequently, several of the club leaders indicated how they encouraged a deeper involvement in the club, highlighting the potential benefits which could be accrued through coaching sport. For example, Alan mentioned how he has urged young people at Central Judo to become involved in a youth volunteering award scheme which has been instigated within his local borough. Similarly, Zaeem divulged how the opportunity to become involved as coaches at a biannual event to promote sporting opportunities for young people who reside on estates in his local borough, acted as a means for his young club members to adopt a leadership position within the community structure (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) and exhibit aspects of participatory citizenship.

...we have two big events twice a year—Neighbourhood Games—which is as many kids as possible from every single estate in the borough. What I do is, I take whatever [young people] I've got from my club, and we give each [one] his little team and then he does everything he has to do and then they come and join us when we're coaching...we try and encourage them to join in like us. For them now, is that they feel as if they are us now....so when they have their own

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<sup>23</sup> Participatory citizenship is characterised by active involvement in community organisations and civic affairs by assuming leadership positions in these efforts; whilst the justice-oriented citizen is concerned with effecting social change by challenging social injustices and addressing the root causes of these injustices.

little kids they know, they think about “we need to look out for them, we need to see where they’re going, we can’t let them go off, we need to make sure they don’t get hurt”...that’s the most....proudest moment I see from my point of view...

Further evidence, specifically from the narratives of the young people, reinforced how a deeper involvement with the opportunities provided by their sports club enhanced the prospect of participatory citizenship. As one exemplar, Faizel’s narrative outlined how the various roles he had accepted within his BMX club had facilitated “relationships, common understandings, trust, and collective commitments” (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 242)—the hallmarks of participatory citizenship.

Faizel, a young Muslim man, resided in an estate adjacent to the park where the Fliers BMX Club is located. At time of interview, he was awaiting results from recently completed GCSE examinations, but had already been “*accepted into some colleges*” to undertake “*A Levels in Maths, Physics, [and] Computing*”. Faizel offered several indications that, through membership of the Fliers, he had assumed and solidified aspects of the personally-responsible citizen (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004), to present an image of a responsabilized, autonomized and single-minded individual who exuded control over his destiny (Silk & Andrews, 2008; Rose, 2000a) and had engineered an array of pathways towards a prosperous future.

Nevertheless, he also offered evidence to outline a burgeoning sense of responsibility to his community, making reference to the active role he had assumed in the development of Fliers BMX by supporting, leading and organising club events which contributed to the enrichment of the local community (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). More specifically, he was able to articulate a self-reflexive recognition of the problems and challenges that other young people in his community face (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004)—not least the pervasive threat of crime—to translate both his experiences within BMX and the tenets of personal responsibility into a positive solution to these challenges.

BMX has changed me through many ways. I've learnt the actual difference between normal life and taking in sports...where I live there's a lot of crime and stuff like that and luckily I haven't got into any of that 'coz I've taken up sports...so you're better off having fun, taking part in sport, where you can learn, you can teach people and encourage other people not to do anything you shouldn't.

As such, Faizel presented a commitment to being a “*role model*” for other young people at Fliers, a responsibility that he evidently and willingly embraced, to further elucidate his more active participation in the community. Notably, when reflecting on his role as an assistant coach at the club, Faizel continually referred to the sense of fun he conveyed in inspiring younger riders, some of whom were disabled and attended the ‘Deaf Friendly Sessions’ offered by the club.

A lot of younger children at the BMX club have been asking me on tips, how to ride, they've seen me going round the track like lightning and they're asking a lot how I do that...and helping them is actually pretty fun. I [also] do some Saturday sessions, where I teach kids with disabilities how to ride. At certain times, it is challenging but it's also fun...as long as you can have fun with the work you're doing there's no problem. [Through coaching] I've learnt a lot of things...to look after everyone, bikes, the safety of everyone else. Although I'm not fully qualified, I've learnt how to teach the children, just to have fun with them, to encourage them. [Also] how to communicate with others, with the coaches...

Furthermore, Faizel's narrative offered fragments of a growing attentiveness to understanding how established systems and community structures operate, alongside an interest in acquiring strategies which would enable him to contribute within the democratic process to gain a foothold in actively tackling community problems (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). To exemplify, Faizel explained how he had recently assumed responsibility as the “*communication leader*” at Fliers, so was required to attend committee meetings and report back to the officers of the club. He explained:

I recently went to a meeting and talked about how I could be the communication leader – to talk to everyone about what's happening at the club, what we could do, organising races, organising whether people can attend sessions. We talked about how the club's doing, what we've got in our accounts, how everyone's doing, how we run the club.

Within this, and other fragments from Faizel's interview, a flourishing sense of pride within his community was evident; further indication of how his deepening sporting involvement, and more precisely, the relationships he had developed within the BMX club, had imbued a perspective on life which resonates with democratic virtues, civic involvement and active, participatory citizenship.

However, evidence of the final form of citizenship described by Westheimer and Kahne (2004)—the justice-oriented citizen—was in short supply. Arguably, the limited presence of justice-orientation within the data should have been expected, in particular given Westheimer and Kahne's (2004) concession that this perspective is often positioned lower in the hierarchy of priorities in educational programmes to enhance citizenship. Nevertheless, the data revealed emerging evidence of some sports clubs incubating a justice-oriented philosophy within their daily practices to "make political issues more explicit...[and] focus on social change and social justice" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 243). As one example, Jay, a young boxer, spoke of the support he received from the leaders at Glynmore to initiate a fundraising activity for a family friend, whose child had been diagnosed with a rare medical condition. Indeed, Malcolm, the club's leader, outlined how instilling the values of justice-oriented citizenship was something he was acutely aware of within his work at Glynmore, in particular in relation to challenging stereotypical perspectives within the young people at his youth club. Drawing parallels with Banks (2013), these endeavours attempt to challenge the prevailing discourses which surround the young people at the club and create spaces to realise alternative visions of a future self. This was most pronounced in his efforts to engage young people with club activities and opportunities which translated beyond boxing, yet were designed to challenge the cultural and structural factors which were embodied within the stereotypical perspectives of the young, black males (Banks, 2013), who typify the membership of the youth club.

We got a studio downstairs, yeah, and when [young people] come in there now, and I say to kids "sing me a song", straight away they'll start with the nigger 'dis and they're rappin', blah, blah, blah, and I look at them and I shut it down, we don't tolerate that. I said to them "try and sing something else". They say, "well it's not like this" – I said "well try and change it, you try and change it", you understand me, "sing me a love song", they look a bit confused...but if you don't put into them to change something it will never happen.

Therefore, despite the data indicating that engagement in sport may confer a variety of qualities related to differing descriptions of citizenship, deeper analysis reveals that sport, or indeed any cultural activity, is largely superfluous in the development of citizenship qualities. Indeed, as Wacquant (2005) remarks, the sporting milieu can, at best, merely offer respite from “the powerful impediments to social stability and mobility” (p.460) that confront the young people within this enquiry by fostering passive forms of obedient citizenship, rather than sport becoming a site to challenge and change society through more democratic forms of citizenship. Thus, and reiterating an earlier critical finding, in order to incubate more active forms of citizenship, programmes which integrate sport as the vehicle for social change need to identify clubs and locations where the leaders and coaches within these clubs are attuned to the tenets of social justice. As such, I argue that participation in sport, *per se*, as a technology of change, possesses limited correspondence within the acquisition and development of citizenship qualities—and, consequently, social inclusion. Instead, the evidence provided in this study would suggest that such possibility is fundamentally premised on the philosophy and practice of the club leaders. However, in order for young people to engage with, and benefit from, these transformative agents, some form of ‘hook’ or ‘fly-paper’ (Coalter, 2008; Nichols, 2007; Frisby & Millar, 2002) is necessary to attract the targeted population to a social inclusion programme. Therefore, and diverging from previous literature, the evidence from this study infers that sport’s pivotal (and, arguably, only) role in the attainment of social inclusion is to bestow a convenient medium through which club leaders who possess a community consciousness (Henderson & Thomas, 2013) can enact social change and instil citizenship qualities. Accordingly, within programmes designed to utilise sport as a means to foster citizenship and enhance social inclusion, only those sports which contain an initial attraction founded upon their cultural salience or significance to the target population should be integrated and promoted within these endeavours.

Such conclusions reinforce notions which temper and caution against the universal application of ‘sport’ as the ‘silver bullet’ through which a multiplicity of social policy objectives can be achieved (Collins, 2010; Coalter, 2007). More specifically, these conclusions accentuate the central importance of interventions which are critically considered, theoretically infused and, above all, contextually aware in their design (Pawson, 2013). Finally, these conclusions endorse perspectives that challenge the presumptive, conventionally-inferred generalisations which appear within the architecture of policy, which overstate the mythopoeic status afforded to sport

(Garratt, 2010; Coalter, 2007), in favour of more bottom-up programme design, which may appear to be more modest in its ambitions, but will deliver outcomes for specific populations in specific circumstances (Pawson, 2006).

### **6.3 Summary**

This chapter has presented detailed insights into the delivery of *Sport for Change* and revealed specific explanations as to how this programme has achieved its objectives and contributed to the enhancement of social inclusion for the young people engaged by the programme. More precisely, this chapter has focussed on the relationship between social inclusion and the development of citizenship qualities, and how different forms of sport participation impact on this development. Most notably, the chapter revealed how mere ‘playing’ participation appeared to be beneficial in developing the ‘personally responsible citizen’ (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004) by developing traits that aided social inclusion when expressed in moral terms. Furthermore, the chapter offered evidence to suggest that ‘deeper’ involvement in sport, through coaching and administrative roles within the sports clubs, appeared to incubate more democratic forms of citizenship associated with social justice and civic engagement (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

However, the chapter also highlighted the various means for engaging young people with *Sport for Change* and noted the predominance of open-access forms of recruitment (Coalter, 2013), primarily through ‘word of mouth’ promotion. Despite this form of recruitment offering an efficient means to engage young people, open-access strategies clearly advantage those young people who possess a broader wealth of existing connections for access to the sports club. Consequently, ‘knowing somebody’ in the sports club is essential to engagement, which rather undermines attempts to locate, identify and assist those who are least connected and, arguably, most in need of support. Nevertheless, yet again, the chapter revealed how the sports clubs (and the personnel within them) were pivotal to providing the metaphorical bridges to incubate social inclusion, an argument which forms the basis for the conclusions which will be drawn within the closing chapter.

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

The aims of this research enquiry were twofold. First, my intention was to elicit detailed insights into the effectiveness of one iteration of the *Sport for Change* initiative (delivered by *Access Sport*), by employing a realist evaluative framework (Pawson, 2013). In doing so, I hoped to probe beyond the quantitative metrics which were associated with the provision of this specific programme to better understand how the initiative worked or, to be more precise, unveil the sufficient conditions which contributed to the efficacy of the programme. Running parallel to this initial ambition was an intention to critically situate the insights gleaned from the examination of this specific case within broader debates surrounding the educative worth of sport as an instrument for social good. As noted, the extant literature, both from academic and ‘grey’ sources, highlights a lack of consensus regarding how interventions which are located under the moniker of ‘sport for good’ actually contribute to social change (Coalter, 2013; 2007; Dacombe, 2013; Bloyce & Smith, 2010). Consequently, while some scholars have suggested that participation in sport may contribute to social inclusion and an enhanced sense of citizenship (Bird *et al.*, 2013; Kaufmann & Wolff, 2010), others, conversely, purport that such programmes offer merely a simple technical device within the conduct of government to control and mould young people into conforming neoliberal citizens (Silk & Andrews, 2008; Rose, 2000a). Uppermost within this paradox is the extent to which evidence informs debate, with much of the critical literature suggesting that notions pertaining to the educative worth of sport are founded on conventional wisdom rather than empirical findings (Dacombe, 2013; Coalter, 2007).

Before constructing my concluding arguments and entering into this debate, it is important to firstly re-state and re-position the central tenets of the realist philosophy which offered the methodological direction for this enquiry. At the cornerstone of the realist framework is the notion of enlightenment, whereby “research on policy [and programmes] occurs through the medium of ideas rather than of data” (Pawson, 2006, p.169). Accordingly, the intention of this enquiry was to critically examine *Sport for Change* and clarify its professional logic, to, subsequently, invite debate, discussion and reckoning rather than generate technical or partisan support for future iterations of the programme (Pawson, 2006; Sanderson, 2002). Thus, embracing the spirit of realist evaluation, the intention within this conclusion is not to provide the ‘silver bullets’ which afford policy-makers the certitude on which to base the architecture of related programmes (Pawson, 2006), but, conversely, to percolate theoretically-driven, yet



modest, suggestions pertaining to the sufficient conditions of this specific programme. Indeed, this research enquiry has evidenced conflicting and contradictory experiences in relation to the social advantages received by programme participants, to further accentuate the view that policy interventions which are launched into contexts which contain existing historical, political and cultural complexity are unlikely to confer exacting benefits on all recipients (Room, 2013), and that the conclusions of such enquiry should be treated with caution and merely present the evidence to refine the initial programme theory that has guided the enquiry (Pawson, 2006; Weiss, 1997).

Therefore, in an attempt to articulate the contradictions and complexities inherent within *Sport for Change*, and disseminate potential programme refinements, a critical departure point is to reconsider the professional reasoning that generated the initial logic model, and which shaped the focus for analysis. As stated, the principal purpose of *Sport for Change* is to enhance a sense of social inclusion within young people classified as NEET or RONI by engaging them in sport-related activity (Comic Relief, 2013). Consequently, the manner in which social inclusion is conceptualised becomes the fundamental concern. Building upon the work of Rose *et al.* (2012), a conclusive finding from this enquiry was the manner in which the young respondents were able to forge a sense of acceptance through the construction of positive social relationships with adult personnel at their respective sports clubs. Critically, not only did these relationships propagate increased belonging with a recognised (and legitimate) social institution, but, in addition, the relationships fostered the necessary recognition and trust of the club leaders to secure acceptance, dispel any stigma associated with being NEET or RONI, and provide a robust foundation upon which different forms of capital could be accumulated. Consequently, and advancing related literature (e.g. Rose *et al.*, 2012; Whittaker, 2010), generating acceptance conceived a nascent sense of social inclusion within the young club members.

However, in order to commence these relationships of acceptance, the enquiry unveiled how the philosophy and practices of the club leaders and coaches assumed a critical role. Indeed, one of the most prominent features of this enquiry was how the personnel at the selected sports clubs were able to look beyond the primary function of the sports club—namely to provide sporting experiences to young people and generate ‘on-field success’—and recognise the pivotal role they performed in connecting with young people who experienced multiple forms of

exclusion or displayed uncertain prospects for their future lives. Whilst it must be noted that at most clubs there was a clear focus upon achieving ‘on-field success’,<sup>24</sup> there was also evidence of an acknowledgment of a wider, social purpose to their voluntary work. As such, and strengthening the claims of Wacquant (2005), the findings revealed how club personnel operated as social agents who were “adept at oscillating between the [sporting] task at hand in a given setting and the broader world beyond it” (p. 460). Consequently, a sufficient condition of *Sport for Change*, which could be incorporated into the refinement of its programme theory, was the critical role that sports club leaders and coaches assumed within the process of social inclusion through the generation of acceptance. Crucially, this condition implies that club personnel should be attuned to the tenets of social justice and the development of democratic citizenship within their younger members (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Furthermore, club personnel would be advised to acquire or demonstrate a community consciousness (Henderson & Thomas, 2013), whereby they exhibit “a political awareness that is bounded by the issues of concern in the local community” (p. 161).

It has been argued elsewhere that adopting such a philosophy presents significant practical challenges within a policy landscape which predicates the sustainability and survival of sports-based programmes upon funding regimes which prioritise short-term impacts through the demonstration of numerical indicators (Spaaij *et al.*, 2013; Green, 2007). Moreover, the prevailing obsession with quantitative metrics often provokes programme staff to focus attention and resource upon those most easily transitioned towards outcomes deemed as successful and disregard individuals whose problems are more complex or acute (Spaaij *et al.*, 2013; Finlay *et al.*, 2010). However, invoking Coakley (2002), the findings of this research enquiry remind us that it is “only when the meaning and experience of sport participation connects young people with others in supportive and positive ways” (p. 24) that the utility of sport can be observed as a means of social inclusion. Therefore, it would appear salient for programme architects and delivery partners to recruit sports clubs to the programme cautiously on the basis of the level of community consciousness that each potential club is able to exhibit.

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<sup>24</sup> For example, Napier Park Cricket Club had won the County Under 16 Cup and had two of the team selected for the County Academy; the Glynmore Club had identified and were developing a clutch of boxers who were destined for the professional ranks; and Central Judo had produced a medallist at the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Nevertheless, in order to consider the mere potential to construct accepting social relationships, first, the target population must be engaged with these transformative agents through membership of the sports club. Within this enquiry, I have argued that if sport does assume a role within the development of social inclusion, then it is at this juncture of initial engagement that it is most significant. More specifically, this requires that the sport provision that is offered within the intervention must possess a cultural salience with the young people that it targets. This requirement is more pronounced given the propensity of many sports-based programmes, including this iteration of *Sport for Change*, to prioritise an ‘open-access’ approach to their recruitment activities (Coalter, 2013). Furthermore, as ‘open-access’ recruitment so heavily privileges those who possess the social contacts which will enable initial access to the programme, this enquiry has identified that for those young people lacking such social networks the statistical probability of becoming engaged, accepted and, ultimately, socially included is significantly reduced. Therefore, and extending previous literature (e.g. Coalter, 2013; Hylton & Totten, 2013), programme architects may be advised to adopt more targeted approaches within their recruitment procedures, which may incur significant time and resource costs, but would appear to be more adept at engaging the intended population and enhancing social inclusion through programmes which are tailored with activities and opportunities specific to that population.

That said, the effectiveness of targeted-recruitment programmes is hinged upon depicting a more complete understanding of the life-world of the target population, to limit the influence of stereotypical comprehensions of NEET youth, and accentuate their preferences, values and aspirations, to ensure that the significant outlay of time and resources is most suitably invested. In the present case, the collective findings would indicate that the life-world of the young people who engaged with this study comprised of a population who were socially isolated, embodying a quarantined existence of limited social connections. Furthermore, commonly regarded indicators of deprivation (DCLG, 2011) infused the locales in which these young people resided, to present unrelenting reminders of both visible and structural exclusion, which extend simplistic and unrestricted access to both crime and anti-social behaviour.

Therefore, as evidenced within this enquiry,<sup>25</sup> efforts to alter the location of the initial engagement—for example, from the sports club to locales inhabited by the target population—and which ‘take sport’ to this population, may possess additional merit in constructing an initial point of contact between sports club and targeted youth to provide fertile ground for the seeds of accepting relationships to be sown.

However, whilst acceptance assumes a pivotal role in propagating social inclusion, as Rose *et al.* (2012) concede, the process of becoming accepted is merely a conceptual starting point for integration into the societal mainstream. Indeed, much of the extant literature has presented a conceptual link which coheres social inclusion with paid employment (Rose *et al.*, 2012; Levitas, 2005; Lister, 2000); a correspondence which becomes more pronounced for populations of young people who are neither in employment nor undertaking education or training in pursuit of paid work. Whilst a small number of young people engaged by the sports clubs associated with *Sport for Change* did acquire employment or apprenticeship opportunities via connections generated through the programme, for the most part, the emphasis was on providing conduits to employment through skill and knowledge enhancement—in short, the accumulation of human capital (Becker, 2006). Clearly, the utilisation of participation in the sports club as a means to engage young people with skills training and employability programmes merely replicated recent endeavours within the youth policy landscape which have prioritised motivational strategies (Strathdee, 2013), and deployed sport as part of an incentivised programme of activities which may enable transition into employment (Spaaij *et al.*, 2013; Strathdee, 2013; Nudzor, 2010).

Nevertheless, as a criticism of this approach, the focus upon supply-side interventions (Spaaij *et al.*, 2013) wholly overlooks the demand-side factors which may render the skills and knowledges developed through such education and training programmes as unsuitable, redundant or insufficient (Brown *et al.*, 2011). Consequently, it would appear that sport-based interventions which only engage young people with skills training and the acquisition of recognised

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<sup>25</sup> For example, much of the youth recruitment undertaken by Napier Park Cricket Club was conducted at local parks, where the youth manager of the club approached groups of young people of South-East Asian descent who were engaged in informal games of cricket, whilst the Victoria Sports Hub is located at a ‘ball-park’ situated within the local residential estate, and was the result of a direct approach by staff at *Access Sport* to connect with youth on this estate.

qualifications may be insufficient *per se*, in enabling social inclusion via routes into paid employment. Moreover, the evidence from this enquiry would infer that the creation of pathways which enable more direct access to employment should become a vital component of future strategizing. At a practical level, this could entail the strengthening of existing connections within the current chain of implementation who have already demonstrated their value in brokering work placement experiences or apprenticeship opportunities where on-the-job training forms the substantive backbone of human capital accumulation. Conversely, delivery partners may be better advised to invest time and resource into the construction of a broader network of 'weak ties' (Granovetter, 2005), which will bolster the accrual of social capital and may increase the wealth of opportunities available to young people associated with the recruited sports clubs, in particular within industries where labour demand is increasing (Spaaij *et al.*, 2013). Extending previous literature, this enquiry has observed how many of the training and employment opportunities that were created through *Sport for Change* were located within the sport and active leisure industry, an industry which some commentators have noted is reducing its workforce, experiencing extensive redundancies (Spaaij *et al.*, 2013), or becoming increasingly dominated by graduate-qualified personnel (Collins, 2010). Therefore, whilst opportunities within the sport and active leisure industry are likely to present the most convenient weak ties to pursue, in particular for sports-based organisations akin to those evident within this study, greater efforts to offer a broader package of employment and apprenticeship opportunities are necessary to ensure that any human capital that is accumulated retains currency within the contemporary labour market.

However, whilst the *Sport for Change* programme exhibited modest success in augmenting social inclusion when framed by theoretical discourses related to employment, more optimistic evidence of social inclusion enhancement was apparent when the analytical device reflected discourses which accentuate a moral dimension. Consequently, the findings of this enquiry have presented evidence which correspond aspects of the programme delivery with contemporary articulations of citizenship, which endorse the demonstration and embodiment of socially, culturally and morally desirable attitudes and behaviours. Most notably, of these desired attitudes and behaviours, those which compel individuals to reduce their welfare dependency and display personal responsibility for carving their own destiny appear paramount (Paton *et al.*, 2012; Silk & Andrews, 2011a; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004; Rose, 2000a). Indeed, perhaps the most recurrent theme to arise from the current enquiry was the manner in which membership

of the sports club propagated a sense of personal responsibility within young people. Encapsulated by a 'sport provides discipline' narrative, both club leaders and young people alike expressed how sporting involvement had instilled values which corresponded with the responsibilized forms of citizenship to which the morally and culturally deficient members of the socially excluded should aspire (Levitas, 2005). Again, the evidence would indicate that this heightened sense of personal responsibility is more attributable to the moral environment created by the club leaders and coaches, than to the 'act' of sports participation itself, an assessment that is reinforced by further findings from this enquiry, which identified how young people who exhibited more democratic forms of citizenship, did so by assuming a deeper and more active role within the development of their sports clubs and communities (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). However, in essence, the study has bolstered previous research, by stressing how the delivery of *Sport for Change* primarily fostered individual freedoms and choice (Coakley, 2002), by positioning a pre-eminence to individual achievement and individual social mobility, as opposed to more democratic strains of citizenship.

Thus, and returning to the debate surrounding the educative worth of sport within the development of social inclusion, this major conclusion would add fuel to the notion that sports-based initiatives, such as *Sport for Change*, are exemplars of neoliberal public policy and manifestations of devices which control the conduct of citizens (Dean, 2010; Rose, 2000a). Whilst it could be argued that the focus of sport-based programmes in promoting social order rather than stimulating individual freedom may be more indicative of a neo-conservative ideology (Heywood, 2013; Levitas, 2005),<sup>26</sup> quite patently, the underlying message which prevails from these programmes is how the retrenchment of state-centred networks of devices and resources to enhance citizenship (Rose, 2000a) is in evidence. Accordingly, sport-based programmes akin to *Sport for Change*, reinforce how the ideology, practices and 'organising logic' of neoliberalism has become the dominant rationality of government in Western democracies (Dean, 2010), whereby individuals who are autonomized and responsibilized are the only population certain to attain membership of the contemporary citizenry (Paton *et al.*, 2012; Peck & Theodore, 2012; Silk & Andrews, 2011a; Dean, 2010; Rose, 2000a). Moreover, it would appear that sport participation, as an educative device, may only be capable of perpetuating,

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<sup>26</sup> At the nucleus of neo-conservative ideology is the restoration of authority and the reinforcement of traditional values pertaining to the family, religion and the nation state, as the means to generate social stability and social cohesion (Heywood, 2013).

sustaining and embedding neoliberal discourse, most appositely, where the primary objective of the sports-based initiative is merely maximising participation rates through a philosophy of ‘sport-for-sport’s-sake’ (Collins, 2010). It could be argued that while a preoccupation with programmes which adopt this philosophy may restrict the social and educative worth ascribed to sport, the manner in which ‘sport-for-sport’s sake’ programmes develop citizens who share common morals, assumptions and values pertaining to their local communities and the wider world is a progressive step, in particular within contexts which are increasingly vulnerable to political or religious extremism. Indeed, within the UK, recently published government policy guidance for schools which specifies how British values should be promoted and reinforced within the formal curriculum (Department for Education, 2014),<sup>27</sup> prescribes a series of messages which could be adopted, supplemented and reinforced within community institutions, such as sports clubs.

Consequently, and building upon related scholarship (e.g. Spaaij *et al.*, 2013; Kelly, 2011; Coalter, 2007), the current enquiry concludes that the social and educative worth of sport is limited in its capacity to address complex social challenges such as those related to the NEET agenda. However, this judgement is compounded by a perspective of neoliberalism which reduces its conceptualisation to an articulation of “a singular, pristine plan or grand design” (Peck & Theodore, 2012, p. 178)—a theoretical abstraction which, as noted, may be insufficient in capturing the ‘actual existence’ of a contextually contingent neoliberalism (Collier, 2012; Goldstein, 2012; Wacquant, 2012). Indeed, as Peck and Theodore (2012) observe, neoliberal measures “are never implemented on *tabulae rasae*, and never in controlled, laboratory-like circumstances; they are never entirely insulated from the vagaries of politics” (p. 180). Therefore, in opposition to the prevailing conceptual basis for neoliberalism as a pervasive, all-encompassing, monolithic, metaphorical Leviathan (Collier, 2012), an emergent group of scholars (e.g. Goldstein, 2012; Peck & Theodore, 2012; Wacquant, 2012) have advanced neoliberalism as a concept open to differing intensities which are shaped by local conditions, history and experiences—what Wacquant has referred to as “an indefinite number of small-n neoliberalisms” (2012, p. 70). As such, the resounding appeal from this group of scholars is for ethnographic enquiry which sheds light on the manner in which neoliberalism is conceptualised and lived in certain contexts (Goldstein, 2012), and which offers perspectives from different

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<sup>27</sup> This guidance positions the fundamental British values as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs (Department for Education, 2014, p.5).

sites, vantage points and conjunctural locations (Peck & Theodore, 2012) to unveil how certain social mechanisms, like sport, can enable certain populations, like young people at-risk of becoming NEET, to resist, navigate and traverse the potentially fraught and destructive landscape carved by the neoliberal project (Winlow & Hall, 2013; Peck & Theodore, 2012). Indeed, as Harvey (2005) reminds us, to metaphorically shrug our academic shoulders and concede that few alternatives exist for marginalised populations refutes the intellectual foundation and civic responsibility of critical scholarship. Consequently, as this enquiry has attempted to expose, identifying how and where young people may (and do) operate within the shadows of an actually existing neoliberalism (Wacquant, 2012) offers the concluding discussion for this research enquiry.

From a contextual vantage point, the exploration of an actually existing neoliberalism within the implementation of *Sport for Change* is particularly apt. More specifically, given that *Sport for Change* extols clear intentions to provide hope to a population of young people for whom the retreating state and pernicious market have reduced, or even abandoned, their support, provides the intellectual scope for the identification of features which enable young people to feel socially included within a political economy which constructs notions pertaining to social inclusion and citizenship upon consumerist contingencies (Paton *et al.*, 2012; Silk & Andrews, 2011a; Sacks, 2000). Therefore, as Harvey (2005) notes, it could be suggested that for populations who reside on the margins of the mainstream, included society, there is little option but to “peer into the tea leaves of contemporary trends to espy either signs of hope for a better future or some sort of transitional crisis...that will hopefully become a catalyst for future change” (p. 251). Whilst transitional crises in the contemporary moment—such as 9/11, the continued and heightened threat of terrorism, and the global economic crisis of 2008—have failed to shake the ideological foundations of the neoliberal order to any significant degree, it would appear that a search for signs of hope<sup>28</sup> provides the only meaningful solution for the socially excluded to obtain full citizenship rights. Quite possibly, as this enquiry has evidenced, it is community sports clubs, through the power of human agency, who could provide a conduit for a politics of hope (Webb, 2013; Sacks, 2000). Indeed, this enquiry has revealed the manner in which *Sport for Change* has

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<sup>28</sup> Whilst conceptual articulations of hope are strongly contested (see Eliot, 2005), this research enquiry adopts Webb’s (2013) notion of ‘transformative hope’, whereby hope occurs, despite evidence to the contrary, in the inspirational qualities provided by the possibilities of extending one’s life aspirations and expanding the horizons of possibility. Consequently, Webb defines transformative hope as “a utopia plus a sense of possibility grounded in the confidence of the power of human agency” (2013, p. 409).



challenged existing perspectives about future selves, afforded opportunities which otherwise would be inaccessible, and, above all, offered hope to the young people who were recipients of the project. Indeed, and expanding previous literature, generating a sense of hope within young people is fundamental to endeavours which purport to construct positive transitions from childhood, through adolescence, and into adulthood (see Luthans *et al.*, 2004; Coakley, 2002).

The intellectual argument surrounding a reduction of the state and the advancement of community-based or third sector organisations as the champions of hope is far from novel.<sup>29</sup> However, building upon this idea, this research enquiry has reinforced existing rationales which premise the promotion of community-based organisations in providing hope to socially excluded populations (see Sacks, 2000). Put simply, the closer proximity of community organisations to the challenges, issues and needs of specific locales enables them to appreciate these challenges more acutely in the first instance, and engineer more effective solutions to them in the second, when compared to the more distant state sector. In sum, for Sacks (2000), “governments create clients, communities create citizens” (p. 171).

Therefore, by returning to the context for this research enquiry, it becomes apparent how this view is redolent with evidence garnered by this study. For instance, recent policy ‘solutions’ that have been offered by governments of varying complexions to address the ‘problem’ of NEETs have centred their attention on investment in human capital as the foremost means of securing employment, and subsequently attaining social inclusion. Clearly, such policy has reduced NEET populations to constructing a cliental relationship with the state, where continued access to welfare is contingent on engagement with activities designed to enhance human capital (Strathdee, 2013). Yet, and advancing the work of Brown *et al.* (2011), human capital alone cannot deliver social justice and social inclusion to young people residing in disadvantaged localities. Consequently, while the opportunity bargain of employment and social justice via education and qualification is less certain in the contemporary global economy

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<sup>29</sup> Indeed, writing over two decades ago, Osborne and Gaebler (1992) presented the notion of a re-invented form of government which placed greater onus on an empowered community sector to become the architects of solutions to their problems and, in turn, foster confidence, competence and independence among citizens. More recently, in the UK, the Big Society ideology has prolonged attempts to rearticulate the relationship between the state and third sector organisations (Stott, 2011), offering an intellectual project that has been heralded as holding significant potential to converse with the sporting community, a sector which comprises the largest portion of voluntary organisations in this country (see Morgan, 2013).

(Brown *et al.*, 2011), this solution appears to be the metaphorical one trick available to the governmental pony.

As such, for NEET and RONI populations, the attainment of human capital is not the missing piece to the social inclusion jigsaw. Additional forms of capital, notably social and positive psychological; also have a critical role to perform. While these two forms of capital in themselves are also incapable of completing the social inclusion jigsaw, they present pivotal pieces which contribute to a more complete picture—social capital to provide the relationships which initiate inclusion, through acceptance, in the first instance, alongside the provision of weak ties which connect young people with employment and training opportunities (Granovetter, 2005); whilst positive psychological capital affords the development of qualities, such as self-efficacy, resilience and optimism, that are equally important commodities for negotiating success in the employment market (Luthans *et al.*, 2007).

Yet these two forms of capital are unlikely to be enhanced by government policy nor catered for by the market, which sieves out citizens on the basis of their economic capacity to consume (Paton *et al.*, 2012; Brown *et al.*, 2011). Instead, the current enquiry would conclude that the only apparatus which remains to offer the hope of social inclusion is that provided by the voluntary or community sector. Evidence from this research has highlighted how an implementation chain comprised of charitable and community-based organisations has attempted to bridge a passageway through the existing neoliberal landscape, and offer hope for young people whose social disadvantage is likely to render them to an excluded minority. This enquiry has also demonstrated how community organisations such as sports clubs hold the potential to deliver the sufficient conditions which may enhance the accumulation of the social and positive psychological capital which are necessary to navigate the complexities of contemporary society. Moreover, the study has revealed how community sport-based initiatives, such as *Sport for Change*, can incubate social inclusion, whether defined in relation to social acceptance (Rose *et al.*, 2012), in terms of paid employment (Spaaij *et al.*, 2013; Levitas, 2005), or through the embodiment of the mainstream moral creed (Levitas, 2005), to present new and critical insights into the educative worth of sport as a mechanism for social change.

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## APPENDIX I: DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ETHICAL APPROVAL

### EIRA (Ethical Implications of Research Activity) 1 FORM

This template must be completed for all research grant applications and should accompany the University's Research Proposal form (RS1) for approval by the Head of Department.

*(Additional departmental information may be incorporated as appropriate, for example from an existing resources form).*

Please note that this procedure is intended to help researchers consider ethical implications of research activity. Researchers are responsible for deciding, in conjunction with their departmental guidelines and professional disciplinary standards, whether a more extensive review is necessary.

**To be completed by Principal Investigator/Staff member**

<b>Brief Title of Project</b>	Enhancing social inclusion, educational attainment and employability through <i>Sport for Change</i> : a realist evaluation
<b>Names of Principal/other Investigators</b>	Haydn Morgan

### SECTION 1: COMPLETION FOR ALL RESEARCH

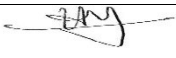
<i>Are there ethical implications concerned with the following general issues? If yes, please provide details below</i>	
<b>1. Data storage</b> (eg Confidentiality, availability, length of storage, etc)	All data will be stored on password protected computers. The names of research participants, names of sport clubs and associated items will be concealed and provided with pseudonyms.
<b>2. Are you free to publish the results?</b> eg Are there any restrictions raised by contractual issues?	Yes
<b>3. Effect on/damage to the environment</b> eg Hazardous waste may be produced; water or air might be polluted; injurious pathogens might be released; damage to ecological systems/habitats.	No

<i>Specific Issues</i>		
<b>4. Does the research involve human participants in any way?</b> (Please note if you are processing personal data you need to tick 'Yes'.)		Complete only Section 1
	Yes	Complete Sections 1 and 2
<b>5. Does the research involve animals in any way?</b>	No	Complete only Section 1
		Complete Sections 1 and 3

<b>Demonstration of Ethical Considerations</b>
<i>Please outline the ethical issues which will need to be managed during the course of the activity.</i>
I will provide each research participant with an 'Information Sheet' outlining the aims of the study; the sample of participants who will take part; how the research will be conducted (and what participants will be required to do); what will happen to the data that is provided; and the participants' rights regarding withdrawal from the study. (Please find attached with this proforma).

### **Declarations**

I confirm that the statements in Sections 1-3 describe the ethical issues that will need to be managed during the course of this research activity.

<b>Principal Investigator</b>	<b>Signature:</b>  <b>Date:</b> 06/02/14
<b>Second reader</b> (This will normally be a person <u>external</u> to the project team.)	<b>Signature:</b> <b>Date:</b>
<b>Head of Department</b>	<b>Signature:</b> <b>Date:</b>

*Please return this form to your Departmental Research Ethics Officer. (Issues will be monitored for incorporation into an annual departmental report to be submitted to the University Ethics Committee.)*

## **SECTION 2: FOR COMPLETION IF YOUR RESEARCH INVOLVES HUMAN PARTICIPANTS**

*If any of the answers to these questions are 'yes', please confirm in the space below how the ethical issues will be managed during the course of the activity.*

*Compulsory question for consideration by all disciplines:*

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Will the study involve obtaining or processing personal data relating to living individuals, (eg involve recording interviews with subjects even if the findings will subsequently be made anonymous)?  <i>Note: If the answer to this question is 'yes' you will need to ensure that the provisions of the Data Protection Act are complied with. In particular you will need to seek advice to ensure that the subjects provide sufficient consent and that the personal data will be properly stored, for an appropriate period of time). Information is available from the University Data Protection Website and <a href="mailto:dataprotection-queries@lists.bath.ac.uk">dataprotection-queries@lists.bath.ac.uk</a></i>	X	

*Departments may amend the following list to include topics of particular relevance to their discipline(s).*

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
1. Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent? (eg children, people with learning disabilities)		X
2. Will the study require the co-operation of a gatekeeper for initial access to the groups or individuals to be recruited? (eg students at school, members of self-help group, residents of a nursing home)	X	
3. Will it be necessary for participants to take part in the study without their knowledge and consent at the time? (eg covert observation of people in non-public places)		X
4. Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics? (eg sexual activity, drug use)		X
5. Are drugs, placebos or other substances (eg food substances, vitamins) to be administered to the study participants and/or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?		X
6. Will blood or tissue samples be obtained from participants? <i>Note: If the answer to this question is 'yes' you will need to be aware of obligations under the Human Tissue Act, see further information at <a href="http://www.bath.ac.uk/internal/ethics/committee/HTA.html">http://www.bath.ac.uk/internal/ethics/committee/HTA.html</a></i>		X
7. Is pain or more than very mild discomfort likely to result from the study?		X
8. Could the study induce psychological stress or anxiety or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in normal life?		X
9. Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing?		X
10. Will financial inducements (or other expenses and compensation for time) be offered to participants?		X
11. Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS?  <i>Note: If the answer to this question is 'yes' you will need to submit an application to the NHS through IRAS, see: <a href="http://www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk/applications/integrated-research-application-system/">http://www.nres.npsa.nhs.uk/applications/integrated-research-application-system/</a></i>		X

### **Section 2: Demonstration of Ethical Considerations**

*Please complete this section if any of the answers to the above questions are 'yes'.*

Access to most participants in the study will be generated through *Access Sport*, a sports-related charity who has provided resources to the sports clubs which will be the sites for much of the research activity. Once initial contact has been made with each club, I will liaise directly with each club to arrange interviews/data collection.

**SECTION 3: FOR COMPLETION IF YOUR RESEARCH INVOLVES ANIMALS**

	Yes	No	In progress
1. Has the project been submitted to and approved by the Ethical Review Committee for the purposes of Home Office approval under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986?			
2. If the research is outside the scope of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 is it controlled by any other UK legislation? If so, please give details below.			
3. If the research is not controlled by UK legislation have the ethical implications of the project been considered by the Ethical Review Committee? <a href="http://www.bath.ac.uk/research/docs/nonlicencedthicareviewformfinalmay2010-2.doc">http://www.bath.ac.uk/research/docs/nonlicencedthicareviewformfinalmay2010-2.doc</a>			

**Section 3: Demonstration of Ethical Considerations**

*This section is available for submission of further details relevant to Section 3.*

## APPENDIX II: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEETS

### *Example 1: Club leaders, coaches and programme staff*

**UNIVERSITY OF BATH  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL  
SCIENCES**

**Enhancing social inclusion, educational attainment and employability  
through *Sport for Change*: a realist evaluation  
Participant Information Sheet**

Dear Participant

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this study. This information sheet will provide you with a bit more detail about the study and what is required from you as a participant. Please read this sheet carefully.

#### **What is the study about?**

The aim of this study is to evaluate and examine the impact of the Comic Relief Sport for Change project which has been implemented and delivered within your club with support from Access Sport.

#### **Who is taking part in this project?**

The participants for this study range from staff members at Access Sport and club leaders/coaches at the clubs who have benefited from the project to young people who have become involved in activities offered by these clubs. The research is being undertaken by Mr Haydn Morgan, under the supervision of Dr Manuel Souto-Otero and Dr Michael Silk of the University of Bath.

#### **What will the participants be asked to do?**

As a volunteer for this study, you will be asked to meet with Haydn Morgan for an interview. These interviews should last for approximately 30 minutes to one hour in duration and will be recorded on Dictaphone or iPad. During the interviews you will be asked a series of questions related to your involvement in the sports club, how this involvement has affected the lives of the young people at your club, and the practices that you adopt to develop and support these young people. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions that will be asked, so you should answer these questions in a way that you feel is most appropriate. The interviews will be transcribed, by Haydn Morgan, to provide a written record of the interviews. At any time throughout either interview, you may ask questions of your own or take a break, at which point, the recording device will be switched off. Please be aware that you are under no obligation to provide information and that you may stop the interview or recording at any time.

#### **When will the interviews be done?**

The interviews will be conducted when you are available at a mutually agreeable time. However, to meet the deadline for this study, it is necessary for all interviews

to be conducted before the end of November 2014. The interview can take place at a location convenient to you.

**Can a participant change their mind about participating in the study?**

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without needing to provide a reason for your withdrawal.

**What will happen to the information provided by the participant?**

All information gathered is anonymous and confidential and will be stored on password protected computers. All information will be destroyed on completion of the project. Only Haydn Morgan and the two supervisors will have access to the data collected. Please note, however, that Haydn Morgan will anonymise the responses before they are seen by the supervisors. Transcripts from the interviews may be used for publications, but your identity will remain concealed at all times or in any published material. You may request a copy of the transcripts of your interviews and a copy of the completed project if desired.

If you have any questions with regards to this project, either now or in the future, please do not hesitate to contact either of the people below. Thank you once again for agreeing to take part in this study.

Haydn Morgan  
Department of Education  
University of Bath  
Email: [hjm23@bath.ac.uk](mailto:hjm23@bath.ac.uk)  
Phone:  
Mobile:

Dr Manuel Souto-Otero  
Department of Education  
University of Bath  
Email: [mso21@bath.ac.uk](mailto:mso21@bath.ac.uk)



*Example 2: Youth participants*

**UNIVERSITY OF BATH  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL  
SCIENCES**

**Enhancing social inclusion, educational attainment and employability  
through *Sport for Change*: a realist evaluation  
Participant Information Sheet**

Dear Participant

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this study. This information sheet will provide you with a bit more detail about the study and what is required from you as a participant. Please read this sheet carefully.

**What is the study about?**

The aim of this study is to evaluate and examine the impact of the Comic Relief Sport for Change project which has been implemented and delivered within your club with support from Access Sport.

**Who is taking part in this project?**

The participants for this study range from staff members at Access Sport and club leaders/coaches at the clubs who have benefited from the project to young people who have become involved in activities offered by these clubs. The research is being undertaken by Mr Haydn Morgan, under the supervision of Dr Manuel Souto-Otero and Dr Michael Silk of the University of Bath.

**What will the participants be asked to do?**

As a volunteer for this study, you will be asked to meet with Haydn Morgan for an interview. These interviews should last for approximately 30 minutes to one hour in duration and will be recorded on Dictaphone or iPad. During the interviews you will be asked a series of questions related to your involvement in the sports club, how this involvement has affected your life, your relationship with the club leader/coaches, and your aspirations for the future. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions that will be asked, so you should answer these questions in a way that you feel is most appropriate. The interviews will be transcribed, by Haydn Morgan, to provide a written record of the interviews. At any time throughout either interview, you may ask questions of your own or take a break, at which point, the recording device will be switched off. Please be aware that you are under no obligation to provide information and that you may stop the interview or recording at any time.

**When will the interviews be done?**

The interviews will be conducted when you are available at a mutually agreeable time. However, to meet the deadline for this study, it is necessary for all interviews to be conducted before the end of November 2014. The interview can take place at a location convenient to you.

**Can a participant change their mind about participating in the study?**

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without needing to provide a reason for your withdrawal.

**What will happen to the information provided by the participant?**

All information gathered is anonymous and confidential and will be stored on password protected computers. All information will be destroyed on completion of the project. Only Haydn Morgan and the two supervisors will have access to the data collected. Please note, however, that Haydn Morgan will anonymise the responses before they are seen by the supervisors. Transcripts from the interviews may be used for publications, but your identity will remain concealed at all times or in any published material. You may request a copy of the transcripts of your interviews and a copy of the completed project if desired.

If you have any questions with regards to this project, either now or in the future, please do not hesitate to contact either of the people below. Thank you once again for agreeing to take part in this study.

Haydn Morgan  
Department of Education  
University of Bath  
Email: [hjm23@bath.ac.uk](mailto:hjm23@bath.ac.uk)  
Phone:  
Mobile:

Dr Manuel Souto-Otero  
Department of Education  
University of Bath  
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## APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW GUIDES

### 1. *EdD INTERVIEW SCHEDULE—CLUB LEADERS*

Preamble:

- Purpose of the research: focussed on how the connection between participation in the *Sport for Change* project impacts on social inclusion among young people recruited to the programme and on the broader strategic outcomes of educational attainment, crime prevention, and employability
- Data will be used primarily for EdD studies, but could translate into academic publications
- All reference to you, club, Access Sport will be anonymised – pseudonyms used

Theme 1: Background of the club and players

- History of the club; number of (young) members and total membership; demographics of adult members
- Social challenges the kids face
- How long have you been involved

Theme 2: Club leaders

- Why do you do it? What benefits do you acquire?
- Describe your relationship with the kids
- Where do we get the notion that sport helps society? How has being involved in sport helped you?

Theme 3: Practices

- Aim of your coaching/leadership?
- Aims for the group/kids?
- What qualities are you trying to instil?
- Environment you try to create? Do you have rules?
- How do you get the kids to engage?
- How are your sessions helping kids in other aspects of their lives – school; employment; social inclusion; social capital;
- How aware of other contexts (school; family; police; gang) are you?

Theme 4: Social inclusion/exclusion

The KPI/Aims of the project note that increasing a sense of inclusion for marginalised and disadvantaged people is primary. Other research and policy highlights similar connections between social inclusion and broader social outcomes.

This suggests that the participants are marginalised and excluded? How are they excluded from mainstream society? Tell me about the backgrounds of some of these participants?

FINAL THEME: OLYMPIC LEGACY

- Changes/impacts you have noticed?

## **2. EdD INTERVIEW SCHEDULE—YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **Preamble:**

- Purpose of the research: focussed on how the connection between participation in the *Sport for Change* project impacts on social inclusion among young people recruited to the programme and on the broader strategic outcomes of educational attainment, crime prevention, and employability
- Data will be used primarily for EdD studies, but could translate into academic publications
- All reference to you, club, Access Sport will be anonymised – pseudonyms used
- If there are any questions you don't want to answer, that's fine.

### **Theme 1: Background of the young people**

- Age
- What do you do? Work? School? College?
- How long have you been involved at the club? Tell me about joining the club - How did you get involved?
- What activities do you do? Level of involvement in these activities [playing; coaching; admin]
- Social challenges the kids face – tell me about living in this neighbourhood
- Is the 'reputation' of this neighbourhood a good or bad thing – how does it help or hinder your life?
- Can you tell me a little bit about your family life? Do your family ever come to the club?
- How has your life changed since joining the club? Tell me about life before and after joining the club

### **Theme 2: Club leaders**

- Why do you come to the club? What benefits do you acquire?
- Describe your relationship with the coaches/leaders [PAWSON]
- Where do we get the notion that sport helps society? How has being involved in sport helped you? How can sport help people to develop?

### **Theme 3: Aspirations and hopes**

- What are your aims/aspirations/goals?
- How are you going to achieve these?
- What's stopping you achieving these ambitions?
- How can sport/club membership help you to achieve these ambitions?
- Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

### **FINAL THEME: OLYMPIC LEGACY**

- Changes/impacts you have noticed?

### **3. EdD INTERVIEW SCHEDULE—ACCESS SPORT STAFF**

#### Preamble:

- Purpose of the research: focussed on how the connection between participation in the *Sport for Change* project impacts on social inclusion among young people recruited to the programme and on the broader strategic outcomes of educational attainment, crime prevention, and employability
- ‘Delve behind the figures’ published in the Access Sport Annual Review 2012-13 in relation to this project
- Data will be used primarily for EdD studies, but could translate into academic publications
- All reference to you, club, Access Sport will be anonymised – pseudonyms used

#### Theme 1: Identification and recruitment

- Voluntary/Outreach: what did this entail? How were the activities marketed? Uptake – looks good (1091 young people benefitted) but was the uptake mainly from kids who already in the mainstream but happen to live in a deprived area? Transference to club participation and membership?
- Targeted: Outline processes into outreach activities and clubs - partners? Identification system? Problems and issues in targeted recruitment?
- Which approach is more successful? How do you measure success of the recruitment activities? [Voluntary may get the numbers up but not reach target population and vice versa]
- Gender divide in recruitment (approx.)

#### Theme 2: Activities

- Are the activities diversionary; deterrence; pro-social development in their design
- Choice of sports: why were these sports/clubs selected? Do any sports appear to have more appeal to participants? Why? Frequency of sessions (typically) [weekly; bi-weekly; training session and match]? Any indication as to how frequency impacts on programme aims]
- Type of activity: Playing vs Coaching/Admin: Would you agree that those who take a deeper involvement (coaching/admin) benefit more?
- The 64 who gained awards/quals: what type of quals? How are they benefitting from them? Are the quals impacting on the broader strategic outcomes?

- The 4 work experience; 1 apprentice; 19 BMX coaches: How were these opportunities created; what did they do? [MUST SPEAK WITH THE 5 PEOPLE]

### Theme 3: The Clubs

- Examples of the better ones; what factors make them good to work with/engage kids/encourage broader strategic outcomes?
- Leader qualities: what do you look for in the leaders of your projects; what makes these leaders engage kids; conceptualise how leaders connect with kids

### Theme 4: Social inclusion/exclusion

The KPI/Aims of the project note that increasing a sense of inclusion for marginalised and disadvantaged people is primary. Other research and policy highlights similar connections between social inclusion and broader social outcomes.

This suggests that the participants are marginalised and excluded? How are they excluded from mainstream society? Tell me about the backgrounds of some of these participants?

## APPENDIX IV: RESEARCH PARTICIPANT ‘PEN PORTRAITS’

### 1. *Youth participants:*

#### ***Ben:***

Residing on the estate which also houses the Glynmore Youth Club, Ben has been affiliated to this club for six years, where he has been a member of the club’s football team. Now sixteen, Ben, of Afro-Caribbean descent, recently left school on completion of his GCSE examinations to undertake a coaching apprenticeship with *Limetree Sports*, which involved coaching an Under 10s football team and working as a Physical Education Assistant at a local primary school. During this apprenticeship, Ben completed a Level 1 Football Coaching qualification (offered by the Football Association) and has commenced the Level 2 qualification. Having completed this apprenticeship, he is now undertaking a new, customer services and business administration apprenticeship offered at the Aquatic Centre at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in Stratford. This opportunity arose through the connection between the Glynmore Club and *Capital Connect*—a connection directly created through *Sport for Change*. Consequently, Ben aspires to forge a career in leisure management, primarily through this experience and the completion of further apprenticeship qualifications.

#### ***Dwayne:***

Dwayne moved across London two years ago, and immediately joined the Glynmore Youth Club, where his uncle (Malcolm) is the club’s owner and manager. Whilst he occasionally plays in the club’s football team, his principal motivation for coming to the club is to “chill out” and avoid “doing a load of bollocks in the roads, getting himself in trouble”. Notably, Dwayne, who is 18 years old, indicated that he was currently not engaged in employment, education or training. However, he expressed a desire to gain employment in the hotel industry, and hopes to find a training course in the local vicinity that could enable the realisation of this aim. Dwayne, of Afro-Caribbean descent, divulged that he had “done very well at school”, but conceded that he possesses a poor attitude to formal education and that his academic skills “had gone down”. By joining the Glynmore Club, Dwayne inferred that he hopes to capitalise on training courses, apprenticeships and employment opportunities that had been created through *Sport for Change*.

***Faizel:***

Faizel is 16 years old and has been a member of the Fliers BMX club for two years. He was introduced to the club by his sister, who was a friend of the people who managed the club at the time. Having initially engaged with the club via a ‘taster session’, Faizel is now an accomplished BMX rider and also contributes to the club as both a coach and the ‘Communications Officer’. He is Muslim, of South-East Asian descent, and currently resides in close proximity to the BMX track where the club is located. Faizel has recently completed GCSE qualifications and, at time of interview, was contemplating his future educational options. These options comprised of undertaking A Levels in Physics, Mathematics and Computing Studies at a local Sixth Form College, or to embark on an apprenticeship with a local social enterprise (*Spokes*), which specialises in the repair, maintenance and retail of bicycles. Whilst Faizel expressed an ambition to “have a career in BMXing” and “take part in the Olympics”, he also mentioned engineering as a desired career. However, ultimately, to do something in his life “that gave honour to his family”, was his principal aspiration.

***Jamie:***

Jamie is 17 years old and expressed an aspiration to become a professional footballer in the goalkeeper position. Having been a member of the Centre of Excellence at one of the London-based professional clubs, such ambition possessed some feasibility. However, as an alternative career plan, Jamie indicated that he would like to be a football coach. Of White British ethnicity, Jamie attends a local further education college where he was completing a BTEC qualification. He had been associated with the Glynmore Youth Club for approximately six months, where his younger brother Terrence (see below) boxed at the club, despite both of them residing over a mile away from the club’s location. Most notably, Jamie divulged that some members of his extended family were “gang-members”—an affiliation that had been offered to him—but that participation in football had presented an alternative, more desirable life trajectory.



***Jay:***

Currently undertaking his GCSE examinations, Jay, who is 16 years of age, and of White British ethnicity, has been attending the Glynmore Youth Club for approximately 18 months. Despite residing in an area of London approximately two miles in distance from the Glynmore Club, Jay joined the club on the advice of his father, who recommended the club as his preferred choice to support Jay's burgeoning interest in the sport of boxing. Whilst boxing plays a major part in his life, Jay expressed an ambition to become a secondary school teacher (potentially in the subjects of History or English) and articulated a projected educational pathway involving further education at his current school and, ultimately, attendance at university, navigating a pathway already traversed by his older brother.

***Majeed:***

In his final year at school, Majeed has been a member of the Glynmore Club for just under a year, following the closure of his local boxing club, some three miles away. Of Afro-Caribbean ethnicity, and Islamic religious persuasion, the sport of boxing was ingrained within his family history—his father had been a professional boxer, his mother participated in boxing-related exercise classes, and his cousin, who operated his former club, was now a member of the Glynmore Club. Training three times a week, Majeed wanted to embark on a professional boxing career, but, following in the footsteps of other family members, noted how his interest in Business Studies at school acted as motivation to both attend further education college in the first instance, and operate his own boxing gym, as a further aspiration.

***Mehtin:***

Mehtin, 17 years old and of Turkish descent, currently attends a local further education college, studying a sport-related Level 2 qualification. He has been boxing at the Glynmore Youth Club for two years, having been personally invited to the club by Michael, the club's Secretary (see below). Mehtin trains at the club 4 days per week, which is located across the road from his family residence, where he lives with both parents, in addition to his younger brother and sister. Mehtin outlined a clear intention to embark on a professional boxing career—an ambition which was endorsed and deemed attainable by the coaches at Glynmore. Moreover, Mehtin

disclosed a strong correspondence between his participation in boxing and a positive transformation to his life, inferring how, through boxing, his destiny is both achievable and within the grasp of his dedication to the sport.

***Noel:***

Noel is 16 years old and of Afro-Caribbean descent. Whilst he resides approximately two miles away from the Glynmore Club, where he has been a member of the football team since he was 14, Noel expressed a strong connection to the club, its leaders, and as a place to “hang out” with his friend Ben (see above), who initially invited him to the Glynmore. Currently, he is studying A Level qualifications in Geography, Business Studies and Law at Sixth Form College in East London, following a strong performance at GCSE, where he secured 2 A\* grades, 4 A grades, and 3 B grades. Notably, Noel attributed his recent academic success to the support and guidance he received from personnel at the Glynmore Club, who enabled him to unlock his academic potential by encouraging him to engage more diligently with his studies. On completion of his A Levels, Noel expressed an ambition to pursue a career in either Law or Geology, and indicated that he had sought out apprenticeship opportunities with large multi-national organisations in relation to the latter.

***Terrence:***

Terrence, 16 years old, and sitting his GCSE examinations at time of interview, had been attending the Glynmore Youth Club for approximately 6 months to train in the boxing gym. As the younger brother of Jamie (see above), Terrence had initiated his affiliation with the club through friends who also boxed at the club. His ultimate ambition was to become a professional boxer, and indicated that he was prepared to dedicate himself to this pursuit once he left school in a few weeks time. However, he was quick to recognise the importance of an alternative career, and spoke of plumbing as a vocation that appealed to him, divulging that he would be prepared to attend college and become appropriately qualified, should his boxing ambitions not be realised.

***Thaqib:***

Thaqib, of Middle-Eastern descent, and in his final year of secondary school, has been attending the Glynmore Youth Club for approximately six months, to follow an interest in boxing that was initiated by his older brother. Having attended several other boxing clubs in the local area, a friend of his brother told him about the Glynmore, where he now trains three times a week. Leaving behind a life which he described as consisting of “chicken burgers a PS3” [Playstation 3], Thaqib indicated that the Glynmore Club was his favourite gym, due to the “coaches and atmosphere” of the club. Thaqib’s ambitions were simple and direct—to become a professional boxer—unable to specify an alternative aspiration.

***2. Club leaders and coaches:***

***Malcolm:***

Following a successful career as a professional boxer, Jamaican-born Malcolm began coaching the sport of boxing at the Glynmore Youth Club in 2003, before assuming ownership of the club in 2009. Since then, Malcolm has combined his employment as a youth worker with voluntary work at Glynmore, where he is the principal boxing coach and mentor to the aspiring professional boxers who train in the club’s gym. Now in his fifties, Malcolm was awarded an MBE in 2007, in recognition of his contribution to youth development in his local area.

***Michael:***

As the “right-hand man” to Malcolm (above), Michael, born in the United Kingdom to parents of Caribbean extraction, is the Secretary of Glynmore Youth Club, and also acts as a mentor to the club members. Residing in the family home, which is located directly opposite the club, Michael, now in his forties, has been a member of the club since he was a child, and has been instrumental in generating the connections which have benefited club members through *Sport for Change*.

***Alan:***

Alan has been involved with Central Judo since 1977, having undertaken every role at the club during this time, most notably in coaching and mentoring. Now semi-retired, Alan, who has lived in the same London borough all of life, exhibited tremendous pride in his local area and has received numerous community awards for his voluntary work at the club.

***Luca:***

Luca is a BMX coach at both Fliers and Eagles BMX clubs. Originating from Brazil, Luca has lived in London for the last decade, creating numerous opportunities for young people to experience the sport of BMX, as well as utilise BMX as an instrumental means for personal development. Consequently, both Luca, and the two clubs with which he is associated, have received several national and regional awards in recognition of his voluntary work.

***AJ:***

Working predominantly at Footjam BMX, a club he joint-founded in 2010, AJ provides coaching support and oversaw the construction of the club's BMX track—a London 2012 Legacy project. As a former national level rider, AJ now single-handedly manages the club.

***Bobby:***

Bobby has been the Manager of the youth section at Napier Park Cricket Club since the club was re-established in 2008. Responsible for in excess of 100 cricketers in the youth section, Bobby, a born-and-bred 'Eastender', combines this voluntary role with his employment as a Fire Safety Officer for the London Fire Brigade.

***Zaeem:***

Zaeem, 24 years old and of Bangladeshi extraction, is the Leader of the Victoria Sports Hub which is located in a ‘ball-park’ on an East London residential estate. Following a particularly “tough upbringing”, which consisted of a troubled educational life, and the pervasive threat of crime and anti-social behaviour on a neighbouring estate to the one where the sports hub is located, Zaeem channelled his passion for sport and is now employed full-time as a Physical Education Teaching Assistant for a Youth Sport Foundation situated within his local borough. By combining this employment with his role at the sports hub, Zaeem utilises sport as a mechanism to engage disenfranchised young people from this residential estate and assist in the development and attainment of their life aspirations, offering his own story as inspiration.

***Musaid:***

Musaid acts as an assistant to his life-long friend, Zaeem (above), at the Victoria Sports Hub. Having been exposed to and experienced a similar development to Zaeem, Musaid reinforces the lessons of his own life to inspire young people on the Victoria residential estate to pursue their life ambitions and develop the local community.

***3. Sport for Change Programme Staff:***

***Amber:***

Amber is the Project Lead of *Sport for Change* at the sport-based charity *Access Sport*. Having assumed responsibility for the programme mid-way through its implementation, Amber has been the driving force for identifying suitable partnerships and development opportunities to maximise the potential of the programme.

#### **4. Vocational training providers:**

##### ***Jim:***

Jim is the Director of *Spokes*, a social enterprise in East London which aims to offer positive experiences to people using the bicycle as a tool of engage to enact social change. Since founding *Spokes* in 2007, Jim has been instrumental in providing community cycling programmes throughout London and offering both vocational training and apprenticeships to young people in the areas of retail and bicycle maintenance.

##### ***Keziah:***

Keziah is the Schools and Partnerships Manager at *Capital Connect*, an educational social enterprise, which offers vocational training and apprenticeships in the areas of business administration, customer services, and sport and fitness, within East London. She, along with her colleague Bryony (see below), is responsible for the ‘community facing’ aspects of the enterprise, and has been central in developing the relationship with *Access Sport*, as well as engaging with young people at the sports clubs recruited by *Sport for Change*.

##### ***Bryony:***

As Partnerships Officer at *Capital Connect*, Bryony is directly responsible for the day-to-day management and maintenance of the partnership generated with *Access Sport*. As a result, she is often the initial point of contact for young people at the sports clubs recruited to *Sport for Change*, making frequent visits to these clubs to provide information and advice pertaining to training and apprenticeship opportunities.